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ORIGINES SACRÆ:

OR, A

Rational Account of the Grounds

OF

Christian Faith,

AS TO THE

TRUTH

AND

Divine Authority

OF THE

SCRIPTURES,

And the Matters therein contained.

By EDWARD STILLINGFLEET, D. D.

Dean of St. Paul's, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

The Fifth Edition Corrected and Amended.

2 Pet. 1. 16. *For we have not followed cunningly-devised Fables, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his Majesty.*

*Neque religio ulla sine sapientia suscipienda est, nec ulla sine religione probanda sapientia, Lactant. de fals. relig. cap. 1.*

L O N D O N,

Printed by J. H. for Henry Mortlock at the Phoenix in St. Paul's Church-yard, and at the White Hart in Westminster-Hall, 1680.

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To his most Honoured  
Friend and Patron,

S<sup>r</sup>. ROGER BURGOIN,  
Knight and Baronet.

S I R,

**I***T was the early felicity of Moses, when exposed in an Ark of Nilotick papyre, to be adopted into the favour of so great a personage as the Daughter of Pharaoh: Such another Ark is this vindication of the writings of that Divine and excellent Person exposed to the world in; and the greatest ambition of the Author of it, is, to have it received into your Patronage and Protection. But although the contexture and frame of this Treatise be far below the excellency and worth of the subject (as you know the Ark in which Moses was put, was of bulrushes daubed with slime and pitch) yet when You please to cast your eye on the matter contained in it, you will not think it beneath your Favour, and unworthy your Protection. For if Truth be the greatest*

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Present

# The Epistle Dedicatory.

De Isid. &  
Osr.

Present which God could bestow, or man receive  
(according to that of Plutarch, ὡς ἔδει ἀνδρώπων  
λαβεῖν μείζον, & χαρῆσαι θεῷ σεμνότερον ἀλλήδεας)  
then certainly those Truths deserve our most ready  
acceptance, which are in themselves of greatest  
importance, and have the greatest evidence that  
they come from God. And although I have had the  
happines of so near relation to You, and acquaint-  
tance with You, as to know how little You need such  
discourses which tend to settle the Foundations of  
Religion, which you have raised so happy a Super-  
structure upon; yet withal I consider what parti-  
cular Kindness the souls of all good men bear to  
such Designs, whose end is to assert and vindicate  
the Truth and Excellency of Religion. For  
those who are enriched themselves with the inesti-  
mable Treasure of true Goodness and Piety are far  
from that envious temper, to think nothing valua-  
ble but what they are the sole Possessors of; but  
such are the most satisfied themselves, when they see  
others not only admire but enjoy what they have the  
highest estimation of. Were all who make a shew  
of Religion in the World really such as they pretend  
to be, discourses of this nature would be no more  
seasonable than the commendations of a great Beau-  
ty to one who is already a passionate admirer of it;  
but on the contrary we see how common it is for  
men



## The Epistle Dedicatory.

*men first to throw dirt in the face of Religion, and then persuade themselves it is its natural Complexion ; they represent it to themselves in a shape least pleasing to them, and then bring that as a Plea why they give it no better entertainment.*

*It may justly seem strange, that true Religion, which contains nothing in it but what is truly Noble and Generous, most rational and pleasing to the spirits of all good men, should yet suffer so much in its esteem in the world, through those strange and uncouth vizards it is represented under : Some accounting the life and practice of it, as it speaks subduing our wills to the will of God (which is the substance of all Religion) a thing too low and mean for their rank and condition in the World, while others pretend a quarrel against the principles of it as unsatisfactory to Humane reason. Thus Religion suffers with the Author of it between two Thieves, and it is hard to define which is most injurious to it, that which questions the Principles, or that which despiseth the Practice of it. And nothing certainly will more incline men to believe that we live in an Age of Prodigies, than that there should be any such in the Christian World who should account it a piece of Gentility to despise Religion, and a piece of Reason to be Atheists. For if there be any such thing in the World as a true height and magnani-*

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

nanimity of spirit, if there be any solid reason and depth of judgment, they are not only consistent with, but only attainable by a true generous spirit of Religion. But if we look at that which the loose and profane World is apt to account the greatest gallantry, we shall find it made up of such pitiful Ingredients, which any skilful and rational mind will be ashamed to plead for, much less to mention them in competition with true goodness and unfeigned piety. For how easie is it to observe such who would be accounted the most high and gallant spirits, to quarry on such mean preys which only tend to satisfy their brutish appetites, or flesh revenge with the blood of such who have stood in the way of that aery title, Honour! Or else they are so little apprehensive of the inward worth and excellency of humane nature, that they seem to envy the gallantry of Peacocks, and strive to outvie them in the gaety of their Plumes; such who are, as Seneca saith, *ad similitudinem parietum suorum extrinsecus culti*, who imitate the walls of their houses in the fairness of the outsides, but matter not what rubbish there lies within. The utmost of their ambition is to attain *enervatam felicitatem qua per-madescunt animi*, such a felicity as evigorates the soul by too long sleeping, it being the nature of all terrestrial pleasures that they do *extenuare et av-*

*rescere*



# The Epistle Dedicatory.

*ῥεῖναι τὸ πρῶτον*, by degrees consume reason by effeminating and softning the Intellectuals. Must we appeal then to the judgment of Sardanapalus concerning the nature of Felicity, or enquire of Apicius what temperance is? or desire that Sybarite to define Magnanimity, who fainted to see a man at hard labour?

Or doth now the conquest of passions, forgiving injuries, doing good; self-denial, humility, patience under crosses, which are the real expressions of piety, speak nothing more noble and generous than a luxurious, malicious, proud, and impatient spirit? Is there nothing more becoming and agreeable to the soul of man, in exemplary Piety, and a Holy well ordered Conversation, than in the lightness and vanity (not to say rudeness and debaucheries) of those whom the world accounts the greatest gallants? Is there nothing more graceful and pleasing in the sweetness, candour, and ingenuity of a truly Christian temper and disposition, than in the revengeful, implacable spirit of such whose Honour lives and is fed by the Blood of their enemies? Is it not more truly honourable and glorious to serve that God who commands the World, than to be a slave to those passions and lusts which put men upon continual hard service, and torment them for it when they have done it? Were there nothing

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

*none who heartily believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and that the matters revealed therein are infallibly true, will ever have the less estimation of it. It must be confessed that the credit of Religion hath much suffered in the Age we live in through the vain pretences of many to it, who have only acted a part in it for the sake of some private interests of their own. And it is the usual Logick of Atheists, crimine ab uno Disce omnes; if there be any hypocrites, all who make shew of Religion, are such, on which account the Hypocrisie of one Age makes way for the Atheism of the next. But how unreasonable and unjust that imputation is, there needs not much to discover, unless it be an argument there are no true men in the World, because there are so many Apes which imitate them; or that there are no Jewels, because there are so many Counterfeits. And blessed be God, our Age is not barren of instances of real goodness and unaffected piety; there being some such generous spirits as dare love Religion without the dowry of Interest, and manifest their affection to it in the plain dress of the Scriptures, without the paint and set-offs which are added to it by the several contending parties of the Christian World. Were there more such noble spirits of Religion in our Age, Atheism would want one of the greatest*  
Pleas



## The Epistle Dedicatory.

Pleas which it now makes against the Truth of Religion; for nothing enlarges more the Gulf of Atheism, than that *μεγα ροτμα*, that wide passage which lies between the Faith and Lives of men pretending to be Christians. I must needs say there is nothing seems more strange and unaccountable to me, than that the Practice of the unquestionable duties of Christianity should be put out of Countenance, or slighted by any who own, profess, and contend for the Principles of it. Can the profession of that be honourable, whose practice is not? If the principles be true, why are they not practised? If they be not true, why are they professed?

You see, Sir, to what an unexpected length my desire to vindicate the Honour as well as Truth of Religion, hath drawn out this present address. But I may sooner hope for your pardon in it, than if I had spent so much paper after the usual manner of Dedications, in representing You to Yourself or the World. Sir, I know You have too much of that I have been commending, to delight in Your own deserved praises, much less in flatteries, which so benign a subject might easily make ones pen run over in. And therein I might not much have digressed from my design, since I know few more exemplary for that rare mixture of true piety,

# The Epistle Dedicatory.

*and the highest civility together, in whom that inestimable jewel of Religion is placed in a most sweet, affable, and obliging temper. But although none will be more ready on any occasion with all gratitude to acknowledge the great obligations You have laid upon me; yet I am so far sensible of the common vanity of Epistles Dedicatory, that I cannot so heartily comply with them in any thing, as in my hearty prayer to Almighty God for your good and welfare, and in subscribing my self,*

Sir,

Your most humble and

June 5. 1662.

affectionate servant,

Ed. Stillingfleet.

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P R E F A C E  
T O T H E  
R E A D E R.

**I**T is neither to satisfy the importunity of friends, nor to prevent false copies (which and such like excuses I know are expected in usual Prefaces) that I have adventured abroad this following Treatise: but it is out of a just resentment of the affronts and indignities which have been cast on Religion; by such, who account it a matter of judgment to disbelieve the Scriptures, and a piece of wit to dispute themselves out of the possibility of being happy in another world: When yet the more acute and subtle their arguments are, the greater their strength is against themselves, it being impossible there should be so much wit and subtilty in the souls of men, were they not of a more excellent nature than they imagine them to be. And how contradictory is it for such persons to be ambitious of being cried up for wit and reason, whose design is to degrade the rational

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ational soul so far below her self, as to make her become like the beasts that perish! If now the weight and consequence of the subject, and the too great reasonableness of it (if the common fame of the large spread of Atheism among us be true) be not sufficient Apology for the publishing this Book, I am resolved rather to undergo thy censure, than be beholding to any other. The intendment therefore of this Preface is only to give a brief account of the scope, design, and method of the following Books, although the View of the Contents of the Chapters might sufficiently acquaint thee with it. How far I have been either from transcribing, or a design to excuse out of the hands of their admirers, the several writings on the behalf of Religion in general, or Christianity in particular (especially *Morny, Grotius, Amyraldus, &c.*) may easily appear by comparing what is contained in their Books and this together. Had I not thought something might be said, if not more fully and rationally, yet more suitably to the present temper of this Age than what is already written by them, thou hadst not been troubled with this Preface, much less with the whole Book. But as the tempers and Genius's of Ages and Times alter, so do the arms and weapons which Atheists imploy against Religion; the most popular pretences of the Atheists of our Age, have been the irreconcilableness of the account of Times in Scripture, with that of the learned and ancient Heathen Nations; the inconsistency of the belief of the Scriptures with the principles of reason: and the account which may be given of the Origin of things from principles of Philosophy without the Scriptures: These three therefore I have particularly set my self against,



## *The Preface to the Reader.*

against, and directed against each of them a several Book. In the first I have manifested that there is no ground of credibility in the account of ancient times given by any Heathen Nations different from the Scriptures, which I have with so much care and diligence enquired into, that from thence we may hope to hear no more of men before *Adam* to save the Authority of the Scriptures by, which yet was intended only as a design to undermine them; but I have not thought the frivolous pretences of the Author of that Hypothesis worth particular mentioning, supposing it sufficient to give a clear account of things without particular citation of Authors, where it was not of great concernment for understanding the thing it self. In the second Book I have undertaken to give a rational account of the grounds, why we are to believe those several persons, who in several ages were employed to reveal the mind of God to the world, and with greater particularity than hath yet been used, I have insisted on the persons of *Moses*, and the Prophets, our Saviour and his Apostles, and in every of them manifested the rational evidences on which they were to be believed, not only by the men of their own Age, but by those of succeeding Generations. In the third Book I have insisted on the matters themselves which are either supposed by, or revealed in the Scriptures; and have therein not only manifested the certainty of the foundations of all Religion which lie in the Being of God and Immortality of the soul, but the undoubted truth of those particular accounts concerning the Origin of the Universe, of Evil, and of Nations, which were most liable to the Atheists exceptions, and have therein considered all the pretences of Philosophy

## *The Preface to the Reader.*

loſophy ancient or modern, which have ſeemed to contradict any of them ; to which (*maniffæ loco*) I have added the evidence of Scripture-Hiſtory in the remainders of it in Heathen Mythology, and concluded all with a diſcourſe of the excellency of the Scriptures. Thus having given a brief view of the deſign and method of the whole, I ſubmit it to every free and unprejudiced judgment. All the favour then I ſhall requeſt of thee, is, to read ſeriouſly, and judge impartially ; and then I doubt not but thou wilt ſee as much reaſon for Religion as I do.

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# ORIGINES SACRÆ:

## The Truth of SCRIPTURE-HISTORY Asserted.

### BOOK I.

#### CHAP. I.

##### The obscurity and defect of Ancient History.

*The knowledge of truth proved to be the most natural perfection of the rational soul; yet error often mistaken for truth, the accounts of it. Want of diligence in its search, the mixture of truth and falsehood: Thence comes either rejecting truth for the error's sake, or embracing the error for the truth's sake; the first instanced in Heathen Philosophers, the second in vulgar Heathen. Of Philosophical Atheism, and the grounds of it. The History of Antiquity very obscure. The question stated where the true History of ancient times to be found, in Heathen Histories, or only in Scripture? The want of credibility in Heathen Histories asserted and proved by the general defect for want of timely records among Heathen Nations; the reason of it shewed from the first Plantations of the World. The manner of them discovered. The Original of Civil Government. Of Hieroglyphicks. The use of letters among the Greeks no elder than Cadmus, his time enquired into, no elder than Joshua, the learning brought into Greece by him.*

**E***nquiries after truth have that peculiar commendation* Sect. I.  
above all other designs, that they come on purpose to gratifie the most noble faculty of our souls, and do most immediately tend to re-advance the highest perfection of our rational beings. For all our most laudable endeavours after knowledge now, are only the gathering up some scattered fragments of what was once an entire Fabrick, and the recovery of some precious Jewels which

were *lost* out of sight, and *sunk* in the *shipwreck* of humane nature. That saying of Plato, that all knowledge is remembrance, and all ignorance forgetfulness, is a certain and undoubted truth, if by forgetfulness be meant the loss, and by remembrance the recovery of those notions and conceptions of things which the mind of man once had in its pure and primitive state, wherein the understanding was the truest *Microcosm*, in which all the beings of the *inferiour* world were faithfully represented according to their true, native, and genuine perfections. God created the soul of man not only capable of finding out the truth of things, but furnished him with a sufficient *weather* or *touchstone* to discover truth from falsehood, by a light set up in his understanding, which if he had attended to, he might have secured himself from all impostures and deceits. As all other beings were created in the full possession of the agreeable perfections of their several natures, so was man too, else God would have never closed the work of Creation with those words, *And God saw all that he had made, and behold it was very good*: that is, endued with all those perfections which were suitable to their several beings. Which man had been most defective in, if his understanding had not been endowed with a large stock of intellectual knowledge, which is the most natural and genuine perfection belonging to his rational being. For reason being the most raised faculty of humane nature, if that had been defective in its discoveries of truth, which is its proper object, it would have argued the greatest main and imperfection in the being itself. For if it belongs to the perfection of the sensitive faculties to discern what is pleasant from what is hurtfull, it must needs be the perfection of the rational to find out the difference of truth from falsehood. Not as though the soul could then have had any more than now, an actual notion of all the beings in the world co-existing at the same time, but that it would have been free from all deceits in its conceptions of things, which were not caused through inadvertency.

Gen. I. 31.

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Which will appear from the several aspects man's knowledge hath, which are either upwards towards his Maker, or abroad on his fellow-creatures. If we consider that contemplation of the soul which fixes it self on that Infinite being which was the cause of it, and is properly *theoria*; it will be found necessary



necessary for the soul to be created in a clear and distinct knowledge of him, because of man's *immediate obligation* to obedience unto him. Which must necessarily suppose the *knowledge of him*, whose *will* must be his *rule*; for if *man* were not fully convinced in the first moment after his *creation* of the *being* of him, whom he was to *obey*, his *first work* and duty would not have been actual *obedience*, but a *search* whether there was any *supream, infinite, and eternal being* or no; and whereon his *duty* to him was *founded*, and what might be sufficient *declaration* of his *Will* and *Laws*, according to which he must *regulate* his *obedience*. The *taking off* all which *doubts* and *scruples* from the *soul* of *man*, must suppose him fully satisfied upon the *first free use* of *reason*, that there was an *Infinite Power* and *Being* which produced him, and on that account had a *right* to *command* him in whatsoever he pleased, and that those *commands* of his were *declared* to him in so certain a way, that he could not be *deceived* in the judging of them. The clear *knowledge* of *God* will further appear most necessary to *man* in his *first creation*, if we consider that *God* created him for this *end* and *purpose*, to enjoy *converse*, and an *humble familiarity* with himself; he had then ἔμφυτον πρὸς τὸ θεῶν κοινωνίαν in the language of *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Converse with God* *Protrept. p. 63.* was as natural to him as his being was. For *man*, as he came first out of *God's* hands, was the *reflection* of *God* himself on a *dark Cloud*, the *Iris* of the *Deity*, the *similitude* was the same, but the *substance* different: Thence he is said to be created after the *Image* of *God*. His *knowledge* then had been more *Gen. 1. 26.* intellectual than *discursive*; not so much *employing* his *faculties* in the *operose deductions* of *reason* (the pleasant *toyl* of the *rational faculties* since the *Fall*) but had *immediately employed* them about the *sublimest objects*, not about *quiddities* and *formalities*, but about *him* who was the *fountain* of his *being*, and the *center* of his *happiness*. There was not then so vast a *difference* between the *Angelical* and *humane* life: The *Angels* and *men* both fed on the same *dainties*; all the *difference* was, they were in the *ὑψηλόν*, the *upper room* in *heaven*, and *man* in the *Summer Parlour* in *Paradise*.

If we take a view of man's *knowledge* as it *respects* his fellow-creatures, we shall find *these* were so fully *known* to him on his *first creation*, that he needed not to go to *School* to the wide

*Seet. 3.*

world to gather up his *conceptions* of them. For the right exercise of that *Dominion* which he was *instated* in over the *inferiour* world, doth imply a particular *knowledge* of the *nature*, *being*, and *properties* of those *things* which he was to make *use* of, without which he could not have *improved* them for their peculiar *ends*. And from this *knowledge* did proceed the giving the *creatures* those *proper* and *peculiar* names which were *expressive* of their *several* *natures*. For as *Plato*

*In Cratyl.*

tells us, ἐ πάντα δημιουργὸν ὀνομάτων ἔβη, ἀλλὰ μόνον ἐκείνον ᾧ ἀπο-  
 ἐλέπιτο εἰς τὸ τῇ φύσει ὄνομα, ὃν ἐκάλεσεν : *The imposition of names on things belongs not to every one, but only to him that hath a full prospect into their several natures.* For it is most agreeable to reason, that names should carry in them a *suitableness* to the *things* they *express*; for words being for no other end but to express our *conceptions* of *things*, and our *conceptions* being but εἰκόνες καὶ ὁμοιώματα πραγμάτων, as the same *Philosopher* speaks, *the resemblances and representations of the things*, it must need follow, that where there was a true knowledge, the *conceptions* must agree with the *things*; and words being to express our *conceptions*, none are so fit to do it, as those which are *expressive* of the *several* *natures* of the *things* they are used to *represent*. For otherwise all the *use* of words is to be a meer *vocabulary* to the understanding, and an *Index* to *memory*, and of no further *use* in the pursuit of *knowledge*, than to let us know what words men are agreed to call *things* by. But something further seems to be intended in their first im-

*In Gen. 2. 19.* *position*, whence the *Jews* call it הַבְּרִלַת הַמִּינִים as *Mercer* tells us, *a separation and distinction of the several kinds of things* :

*Oedip. Egypt.* and *Kircher* thus paraphrased the words of *Moses*. *And what-*  
*Tom. 2. Class. 2.* *soever Adam called every living creature, that was the name there-*  
*cap. 1.* *of*, i. e. saith he, *Fuerunt illis vera & germana nomina & rerum naturis propriè accommodata.* But however this be, we have this further evidence of that height of knowledge which must be supposed in the *first man*, that as he was the *first* in his kind, so he was to be the *standard* and *measure* of all that followed, and therefore could not want any thing of the *due* *perfections* of humane nature. And as the *shekel* of the *Sanctuary* was, if not double to others, (as men ordinarily mistake) yet of a full and exact weight, because it was to be the *standard* for all other weights (which was the cause of its being kept



kept in the *Temple*.) So if the *first man* had not double the proportion and measure of knowledge which his *posterity* hath, if it was not *running over* in regard of abundance, yet it must be *pressed down* and *shaken together* in regard of weight, else he would be a very unfit *standard* for us to judge by, concerning the *due* and *suitable* *perfections* of *humane nature*.

But we need not have run so far back as the *first man* to Sect. 4. evince the *knowledge of truth* to be the most natural *perfection* of the *soul* of man; for even among the present *ruines* of *humane nature* we may find some such *noble* and *generous* spirits, that discern so much *beauty* in the *face* of *truth*, that to such as should enquire what they find so *attractive* in it, their answer would be the same with *Aristotle's* in a like case, it was *τοῦτο ἐρώμεθα*, the *Question* of those who never saw it. For so *pleasing* is the *enquiry*, and so *satisfactory* the *finding* of *truth* after the *search*, that the *relish* of it doth far exceed the greatest *Epicurism* of *Apicius*, or the most costly entertainments of *Cleopatra*; there being no *Gust* so exquisite as that of the *mind*, nor any *Jewels* to be compared with *Truth*. Nor do any persons certainly better deserve the name of *men*, than such who allow their *reason* a full employment, and think not the *erectness* of man's *stature* a sufficient *distinction* of him from *Brutes*. Of which those may be accounted only a higher *species* who can patiently suffer the *imprisonment* of their *intellectuals* in a *Dungeon* of *Ignorance*, and know themselves to be *men*, only by those *Characters* by which *Alexander* knew himself not to be a *God*, by their proneness to *intemperance* and *sleep*. So strange a *Metempsychosis* may there be without any change of bodies, and *Euphorbus* his *soul* might become a *Brute*, without ever removing its *lodging* into the body of an *Ass*. So much will the *soul* degenerate from it self, if not *improved*, and in a kind of *sullenness* scarce appear to be what it is, because it is not *improved* to what it may be.

But if this knowledge of truth be so great, so natural, so valuable a perfection of *humane nature*, whence comes so much of the Sect. 5. world to be over-run with *Ignorance* and *Barbarism*, whence come so many pretenders to knowledge, to court a cloud instead of *Juno*, to pretend a Love to truth, and yet to fall down and worship error? If there were so great a sympathy between the *soul* and *truth*, there would be an impatient desire after it, and a most ready embracing

bracing and closing with it. We see the Magnet doth not draw the Iron with greater force than it seems to run with impatience into its closest embraces. If there had been formerly so intimate an acquaintance between the soul and truth, as Socrates fancied of friends in the other world, there would be an harmonious closure upon the first appearance, and no divorce to be after made between them?

*Ansiv.* True, but then we must consider there is an intermediate state between the former acquaintance, and the renewal of it, wherein all those remaining characters of mutual knowledge are sunk so deep, and lie so hid, that there needs a new fire to be kindled to bring forth those latent figures, and make them again appear legible. And when once those tokens are produced of the former friendship, there are not more impatient longings, nor more close embraces between the touched needle and the Magnet, than there are between the understanding and discovered truth. But then withall, we are to consider that they are but few whose souls are awakened out of that Lethargy they are fallen into in this degenerate condition, the most are so pleased with their sleep, that they are loth to disturb their rest, and set a higher price upon a lazy Ignorance, than upon a restless Knowledge. And even of those whose souls are as it were between sleeping and waking, what by reason of the remaining confusion of the species in their brains, what by the present dimness of their sight, and the hovering uncertain light they are to judge by, there are few that can put a difference between a meer phantasm and a real truth. Of which these rational accounts may be given, viz. *Why so few pretenders to knowledge do light on truth.*

*Sect. 6.* First, want of an impartial diligence in the search of it. Truth now must be sought, and that with care and diligence, before we find it; Jewels do not use to lie upon the surface of the earth: High-ways are seldom paved with Gold; what is most worth our Finding, calls for the greatest search. If one that walks the streets should find some inestimable Jewel, or one that travels the road meet with a bag of gold, it would be but a silly design of any to walk the street, or travel the road in hopes to meet with such a purchase to make them rich. If some have happily light on some valuable truths when they minded nothing less than them, must this render a diligence useless in inquiries



*inquiries after such? No: Truth, though she be so fair and pleasing as to draw our affections, is yet so modest as to admit of being courted, and, it may be, deny the first suit, to heighten our importunity. And certainly nothing hath oftner forbid the banes between the Understanding and Truth inquired after, than partiality and pre-occupation of Judgment: which makes men enquire more diligently after the dowry than the beauty of Truth, its correspondency to their Interests, than its evidence to their understandings. An useful error hath often kept the Keys of the mind for free admission, when important truths but contrary to their pre-conceptions or interests have been forbidden entrance. Prejudice is the wrong bias of the soul, that effectually keeps it from coming near the mark of truth; nay, sets it at the greatest distance from it. There are few in the world that look after truth with their own eyes, most make use of spectacles of others making, which makes them so seldom behold the proper lineaments in the face of Truth; which the several tinctures from education, authority, custom and pre-disposition do exceedingly hinder men from discerning of.*

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*Another reason why there are so few who find Truth, when so many pretend to seek it, is, That near resemblance which Error often bears to Truth. It hath been well observed, that Error seldom walks abroad the world in her own raiments; she always borrows something of Truth, to make her more acceptable to the world. It hath been always the subtilty of grand deceivers to graft their greatest errors on some material truths, to make them pass more undiscernable to all such who look more at the root on which they stand, than on the fruits which they bring forth. It will hereafter appear how most of the grossest of the Heathen errors have, as Plutarch saith of the Egyptian fables, ἀνὰ τοὺς πύλῃς ἐμυδάσκει τὴν ἀληθείαν, some faint and obscure resemblances of truth; nay more than so, as most pernicious weeds are bred in the fattest soils, their most destructive principles have been founded on some necessary and important truths. Thus Idolatry doth suppose the belief of the existence of a Deity; and Superstition the immortality of the souls of men. The Devil could never have built his Chapels, but on the same ground whereon God's Temples stood; which makes me far less wonder than many do, at the meeting with many expressions concerning these two grand truths in the writings*

Seet. 7.

of

of ancient *Heathens*, knowing how willing the *Devil* might be to have such *principles* still owned in the *world*, which by his *depraving* of them might be the *nourishers* of *Idolatry* and *Superstition*. For the general *knowledge* of a *Divine nature*, supposing men *ignorant* of the *true God*, did only lay a *foundation* to erect his *idolatrous Temples* upon; and the *belief* of the *soul's* surviving the *body* after death, without *knowledge* of the *true way* of attaining *happiness*, did make men more eager of embracing those *Rites* and *Ceremonies*, which came with a *pretence* of shewing the *way* to a *blest immortality*.

Seet. 8.

Which may be a most probable *reason* why *Philosophy* and *Idolatry* did increase so much together as they did; for though *right reason* fully *improved*, would have *overthrown* all those cursed and *idolatrous practices* among the *Heathens*; yet *reason* only discerning some *general notions* without their *particular application* and *improvement*, did only *dispose* the most ordinary sort of *people* to a more ready *entertainment* of the most gross *Idolatry*. For hereby they *discerned* the *necessity* of some kind of *worship*, but could not find out the *right way* of it, and therefore they greedily *followed* that which was *commended* to them, by *such* who did withall *agree* with them in the *common sentiments* of humane nature: Nay, and those *persons* themselves who were the great *maintainers* of these *sublimier notions* concerning *God* and the *soul of man*, were either the great *Instruments* of advancing that horrid *superstition* among them, as *Orpheus* and *Apollonius*, or very forward *Compliers* with it, as many of the *Philosophers* were. Although withall it cannot be denied to have been a wonderfull *discovery* of *Divine providence*, by these *general notions* to keep *waking* the inward *senses* of *mens souls*, that thereby it might appear when *Divine revelation* should be manifested to them, that it brought nothing contrary to the *common principles* of humane nature, but did only *rectify* the *depravations* of it, and clearly shew men that way which they had long been ignorantly seeking after. Which was the excellent advantage the *Apostle* made of the *Inscription* on the *Altar* at *Athens* to the *unknown God*; whom, saith he, ye ignorantly serve, him I declare unto you. And which was the happy use the *Primitive learned Christians* made of all those *passages* concerning the *divine nature*, and the *Immortality* of the *souls of men*, which they found in the *Hea-*

then

Act. 17. 23.



then *Writers*, thereby to evidence to the world that the main *postulata* or *suppositions* of *Christian Religion* were granted by their own most admired men: and that *Christianity* did not *raise* out, but only *build* upon those *common foundations*, which were entertained by all who had any *name* for *reason*.

Though this, I say, were the happy effect of this building *errors* on *common truths* to all that had the advantage of *Divine Revelation* to discern the one from the other; yet as to others who were destitute of it, they were liable to this two-fold great inconvenience by it. First, for the sake of the apparent rottenness of the *Superstructures*, to question the soundness of the foundations on which they stood. And this I doubt not was the case of many *considerative heathens*, who observing that monstrous and unreasonable way of worship obtaining among the heathen, and not being able by the strength of their own reason, through the want of *divine revelation*, to deduce any certain instituted worship, they were shrewdly tempted to renounce those principles, when they could not but abhor the conclusions drawn from them; for there is nothing more usual than for men who exceedingly detest some absurd consequence they see may be drawn from a principle supposed, to reject the principle it self for the sake of that consequence, which it may be doth not necessarily follow from it, but through the shortness of their own reason doth appear to them to do so. Thus when the intelligent heathen did apparently see that from the principles of the Being of God, and the Immortality of souls, did flow all those unnatural and inhumane Sacrifices, all those absurd and ridiculous Rites, all those execrable and profane Mysteries, out of a loathing the immoralities and impieties which attended these, they were brought to question the very truth and certainty of those principles which were capable of being thus abused.

*Sect. 9.*

And therefore I am very prone to suspect the *Apology* usually made for *Protagoras*, *Diagoras*, and such others of them who were accounted *Atheists*, to be more favourable than true, viz. that they only rejected those heathen Deities, and not the belief of the *Divine nature*. I should think this account of their reputed *Atheism* rational, were it any ways evident that they did build their belief of a *Divine nature*, upon any other grounds than such as were common to them with those whose worship they so much derided. And therefore when the Heathens accused

*Sect. 10.*

the *Christians* of *Atheism*, I have full and clear evidence that no more could be meant thereby than the rejection of their way of worship, because I have sufficient Assurance from them that they did believe in a *Divine nature*, and an *instituted Religion* most suitable to the most common received notions of God, which they owned in opposition to all *heathen worship*. Which I find not in the least pretended to by any of the forementioned persons, nor any thing of any different way of Religion asserted, but only a *destruction* of that in use among them.

Señ. II.

De Idololat. c. 1.

And although the case of *Anaxagoras Clazomenius*, and the rest of the *Ionick Philosophers*, might seem very different from *Diagoras*, *Theodorus*, and those beforementioned, because although they denied the gods in vulgar repute to be such as they were thought to be (as *Anaxagoras* call'd the Sun *μῦδος διάνυ-εσν*, a mere globe of fire, for which he was condemned at *Athens* to banishment, and fined five talents; yet the learned *Vossius* puts in this Plea in his behalf, That he was one that asserted the creation of the world to flow from an eternal mind:) although therefore, I say, the case of the *Ionick Philosophers* may seem far different from the others, because of their asserting the production of the world (which from *Thales Milesius* was conveyed by *Anaximander* and *Anaximenes* to *Anaxagoras*) yet to one that thoroughly considers what they understood by their eternal mind, they may be sooner cleared from the imputation of *Atheism*, than *Irreligion*. Which two certainly ought in this case to be distinguished; for it is very possible for men, meeting with such insuperable difficulties about the casual concurrence of Atoms for the production of the world, or the eternal existence of matter, to assert some eternal mind, as the first cause of these things, which yet they may imbrace only as an hypothesis in Philosophy to solve the phenomena of nature with, but yet not to make this eternal mind the object of adoration. And so their asserting a Deity was only on the same account as the Tragedians used to bring in their Θεὸς ἐπὶ μηχανῆς, when their Fables were brought to such an issue, and perplexed with so many difficulties that they saw no way to clear them again, but to make some God come down upon the Stage to solve the difficulties they were engaged in; or, as *Seneca* saith of many great Families when they had run up their Genealogies so high that they could go no further, they then fetched their pedigree from



from the *Gods*: So when these *Philosophers* saw such *incongruities* in asserting an *infinite* and *eternal series* of *matter*, they might by this be brought to acknowledge some *active principle* which produced the world, though they were far enough from giving any *religious worship* to that *eternal mind*.

Thus even *Epicurus* and his *Followers* would not stick to as- Sect. 12.  
sert the *being* of a *God*, so they might but *circumscribe* him within the *heavens*, and let him have nothing to do with *things* that were done on *earth*. And how *uncertain* the most *dogmatical* of them all were, as to their *opinions* concerning the *being* and *nature* of their *gods*, doth fully appear from the large *discourses* of *Tully* upon that subject: where is fully manifested their *variety* of *opinions* and *mutual repugnancies*, their *self-contradictions* and *inconstancy* in their own *assertions*; which hath made me somewhat *inclinable* to think that the *reason* why many of them did to the *world* own a *Deity*, was, That they might not be *Martyrs* for *Atheism*: Which *Tully* likewise seems to acknowledge, when speaking of the punishment of Pro- De nat. Deor.  
tagoras, for that Speech of his; *De diis neque ut sint, neque ut non sint, habeo dicere. Ex quo equidem existimo tardiores ad hanc sententiam profitendam multos esse factos, quippe cum penam ne dubitatio quidem effugere potuisset.* So that for all the *verbal* asserting of a *Deity* among them, we have no certain evidence of their firm *belief* of it, and much less of any *worship* and *service* they owed unto it. And though, it may be, could not totally *excuse* the *notions* of a *Deity* out of their minds, partly through that *natural sense* which is *engraven* on the *souls* of *men*; partly, as being *unable* to *solve* the *difficulties* of *nature*, without a *Deity*; yet the *observing* the *notorious vanities* of *Heathen worship*, might make them look upon it as a mere *Philosophical speculation*, and not any thing that had an *influence* upon the *government* of *mens lives*: For, as in *nature*, the *observing* the great mixture of *falsehood* and *truth* made the *Academicks* deny any certain *κρίσιον*, or *rule of judging truth*; and the *Scepticks* take away all *certain assent*; so the same consequence was *unavoidable* here, upon the same *principle*; and that made even *Plato* himself so *ambiguous* and *uncertain* in his *discourses* of a *Deity*, sometimes making him an *eternal mind*, sometimes asserting the *whole world*, *Sun*, *Moon*, *Stars*, *Earth*, *Souls* and all, to be *Gods*, and even those that were worshipped

among the *heathens*, as *Tully* tells us out of his *Timæus* and *de Legibus* ; which as *Velleius* the *Epicurean* there speaks, *Et per se sunt falsa & sibi invicem repugnantia*. This is the first inconvenience following the mixture of truth and falsehood, for the sake of the falsehood to question the truth it self it was joyned with.

Señ. 13.

The other is as great which follows, when truth and falsehood are mixed, for the sake of the truth to embrace the falsehood. Which is a mistake as common as the other ; because men are apt to think that things so vastly different as truth and falsehood, could never blend, or be incorporate together ; therefore when they are certain they have some truth, they conclude no falsehood to be joyned with it. And this I suppose to have been the case of the more credulous and vulgar *Heathens*, as the other was of the *Philosophers* ; for they, finding mankind to agree in this, not only that there is a God, but that he must be worshipp'd, did without scruple make use of the way of worship among them, as knowing there must be some, and they were ignorant of any else. And from hence they grew to be as confident believers of all those fables and traditions on which their idolatry was founded, as of those first principles and notions from which the necessity of divine worship did arise. And being thus habituated to the belief of these things, when truth it self was divulged among them, they suspected it to be only a corruption of some of their fables. This *Celsus* the *Epicurean* on all occasions in his books against the *Christians*, did fly to. Thus he saith the building of the Tower of Babel, and the confusion of Tongues, was taken from the fable of the *Aloadæ* in *Homer's* *Odyssees* ; the story of the *Floud*, from *Deucalion* ; *Paradise*, from *Alcinous* his Gardens, the burning of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, from the story of *Phaeton*. Which *Origen* well refutes, from the far greater antiquity of those relations among the *Jews*, than any among the *Greeks* : and therefore the corruption of the tradition was in them, and not the *Jews*. Which must be our only way for finding out which was the original, and which the corruption, by demonstrating the undoubted antiquity of one beyond the other, whereby we must do as *Archimedes* did by the Crown of *Hiero*, find out the exact proportions of truth and falsehood which lay in all those heathen fables.

Apud Orig. c.  
Cels. l. 4. p. 174.  
179.

Señ. 14.

And this now leads to the third account, Why truth is so hardly discerned from error, even by those who search after it, which



which is the great obscurity of the History of Ancient Times, which should decide the Controversie. For there being an universal agreement in some common principles, and a frequent resemblance in particular traditions, we must of necessity, for the clearing the truth from its corruption, have recourse to ancient history, to see if thereby we can find out where the Original tradition was best preserved, by what means it came to be corrupted, and whereby we may distinguish those corruptions from the Truths to which they are annexed: Which is the design and subject of our future discourse, viz. to demonstrate that there was a certain original and general tradition preserved in the world concerning the eldest Ages of the world; that this tradition was gradually corrupted among the Heathens; that notwithstanding this corruption there were sufficient remainders of it to evidence its true original; that the full account of this tradition is alone preserved in those books we call the Scriptures: That where any other history seems to cross the report contained in them, we have sufficient ground to question their credibility; and that there is sufficient evidence to clear the undoubted certainty of that history which is contained in the Sacred Records of Scripture. Wherein we shall observe the same method which Thales took in taking the height of the Pyramids, by measuring the length of their shadow; so shall we the height and antiquity of truth from the extent of the fabulous corruptions of it. Which will be a work of so much the greater difficulty, because the truth we pursue after takes covert in so great antiquity, and we must be forced to follow its most flying footsteps through the dark and shady paths of ancient history. For though history be frequently called the Light of Truth, and the Herald of Times, yet that light is so faint and dim, especially in Heathen Nations, as not to serve to discover the face of Truth from her counterfeit, Error; and that Herald so little skill'd, as not to be able to tell us which is of the Elder house. The reason is, though Truth be always of greater Antiquity, yet Error may have the more wrinkled face, by which it often imposeth on such who guess antiquity by deformity, and think nothing so old as that which can give the least account of its own age. This is evidently the case of those who make the pretence of ancient history a plea for Infidelity, and think no argument more plausible to impugn the certainty of Divine Revelation with, than the

the seeming *repugnancy* of some *pretended histories* with the *account* of *ancient time* reported in the *Bible*. Which being a *pre-text* so *unworthy*, and designed for so ill an end, and so frequently made use of, by such who account *Infidelity* a piece of *antiquity* as well as *reason*, it may be worth our while to shew, That it is no more *liable* to be *baffled* with *reason*, than to be *confuted* by *antiquity*.

Sect. 15.

In order therefore to the removing of this stumbling-block in our way, I shall *first* evince, *that there is no certain credibility in any of those ancient histories which seem to contradict the Scriptures*, nor any ground of reason why we should assent to them, when they differ from the *Bible*: and then prove, *that all those undoubted characters of a most certain and authentick history are legible in those records contained in Scripture*. Whereby we shall not only shew the *unreasonableness* of *infidelity*, but the *rational evidence* which our *faith* doth stand on as to these things. I shall demonstrate the *first* of these, *viz. that there is no ground of assent to any ancient histories which give an account of things different from the Scriptures*, from these arguments; *The apparent defect, weakness and insufficiency of them as to the giving an account of elder times; The monstrous confusion, ambiguity and uncertainty of them in the account which they give; The evident partiality of them to themselves, and inconsistency with each other*. I begin with the first of these, the *defect and insufficiency* of them to give in such an account of elder times as may amount to *certain credibility*; which, if cleared, will of it self be sufficient to manifest the *incompetency* of those records, as to the laying any *foundation* for any *firm assent* to be given to them. Now this *defect and insufficiency* of those histories is either more *general*, which lies in common to them all, or such as may be observed in a *particular consideration* of the *histories* of those several *Nations* which have pretended highest to *antiquity*.

Sect. 16.

The *general defect* is, the *want of timely records to preserve their histories in*. For it is most evident, that the truest history in the world is *liable* to various *corruptions* through *length* of time, if there be no *certain way* of preserving it *entire*. And that, through the *frailty* of *memory* in those who had *integrity* to preserve it, through the *gradual increase* of *barbarism* and *ignorance*, where there are no *ways* of *instruction*, and through the



the subtilty of such whose interest it may be to corrupt and alter that tradition. If we find such infinite variety and difference of men, as to the histories of their own times, when they have all possible means to be acquainted with the truth of them; what account can we imagine can be given by those who had no certain way of preserving to posterity the most authentick relation of former Ages? Especially, it being most evident, that where any certain way of preserving tradition is wanting, a People must soon degenerate into the greatest stupidity and barbarism, because all will be taken up in minding their own petty concerns, and no encouragement at all given to such publick spirits, who would mind the credit of the whole Nation. For what was there for such to employ themselves upon, or spend their time in, when they had no other kind of learning among them, but some general traditions conveyed from father to son, which might be learned by such who followed nothing but domestick employments? So that the sons of Noah, after their several dispersions and plantations of several Countreys, did gradually degenerate into ignorance and barbarism: for, upon their first settling in any Countrey, they found it employment sufficient to cultivate the Land, and fit themselves habitations to live in, and to provide themselves of necessities for their mutual comfort and subsistence. Besides this, they were often put to removes from one place to another, where they could not conveniently reside (which *Thucydides* speaks much of as to the ancient state of Greece) and it was a great while before they came to imbody themselves together in Towns and Cities, and from thence to spread into Provinces, and to settle the bounds and extents of their Territories. The first age, after the plantation of a Countrey being thus spent, the next saw it necessary to fall close to the work of husbandry, not only to get something out of the earth for their subsistence; but when by their diligence they had so far improved the ground, that they had not only enough for themselves, but to spare to others, they then found out a way for commerce one with another by exchange. This way of traffick made them begin to raise their hopes higher, of enriching themselves; which when some of them had done, they bring the poorer under their power, and reign as Lords over them; these rich, with their dependants, strive to outvie each other, whence came wars and mutual contentions,

contentions, till they who got the better over their adversaries, took still greater authority into their hands (thence at first every City almost, and adjacent Territory, had a King over it) which by conflicting with each other, at last brought several Cities and Territories under the power of one particular person, who thereby came to reign as sole Monarch over all within his dominions.

Sett. 17.

For although there be some reason to think that the Leaders of several Colonies had at first superiority over all that went with them; yet there being evidence in few Nations of any continued succession of Monarchs from the posterity of Noah, and so great evidence of so many petty royalties almost in every City (as we read of such multitudes of Kings in the small territory of Canaan, when Joshua conquered it,) this makes it at least probable to me, that after the death of the first Leader, by reason of their poverty and dispersedness of habitations, they did not incorporate generally into any Civil government under one head, but did rise by degrees in the manner before set down; but yet so, that in the petty divisions some prerogative might be given to him who derived his pedigree the nearest from the first Founder of that plantation; which in all probability is the meaning of Thucydides, who tells us when the riches of Greece began to increase, and their power improved, Tyrannies were erected in most Cities (*πρότερον δὲ ἦσαν ἐν ἡμετέροις πόλεσιν πατερνὰ βασίλεια*, for before that time Kingdoms with honours limited were hereditary) for so the Scholiast explains it, *πατερνὰ βασίλεια ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς παραλαμβάνοντες κατὰ διαδοχὴν γίνεσθαι*. This then being the state and case of most Nations in the first ages after their plantation, there was no likelihood at all of any great improvement in knowledge among them; nay so far from it, that for the first ages, wherein they conflicted with poverty and necessity, there was a necessary decay among them, of what knowledge had been conveyed to them; because their necessities kept them in continual employment; and after that they conquered them, they began to conquer each other, that 'till such time as they were settled in peace under established Common-wealths, there was no leisure, nor opportunity for any Arts and Sciences to flourish, without which all certain histories of their own former state must vanish and dwindle into some fabulous stories. And so we find they did in most Nations, which thence are

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Lib. 1. hist. p.  
10. Ed. Port.



able to give no other account of themselves, but that they sprung out of the earth where they lived ; from which opinion the Athenians used to wear of old their golden grasshoppers, as Thucydides relates. What account can we then expect of ancient times from such Nations which were so defective in preserving their own Originals?

Now this defectiveness of giving testimony of ancient times by these Nations, will further appear by these two considerations: First, *What ways there are for communicating knowledge to posterity.* Secondly, *How long it was ere these Nations came to be Masters of any way of certain communicating their conceptions to their Successors.* Three general ways there are whereby knowledge may be propagated from one to another ; by representative symbols, by speech, and by letters. The first of these was most common in those elder times, for which purpose Clemens Alexandrinus produceth the testimony of an ancient Grammarian, Dionysius Thrax in his Exposition of the symbol of the wheels: ἐσχημαῖον γὰρ ἔστι διὰ λέξεως μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ συμβόλων ἔνιοι *Strom. l. 5.* τὰς πράξεις : That some persons made a representation of their actions to others, not only by speech, but by symbols too. Which any one who is any ways conversant in the Learning of those ancient times, will find to have been the chief way of propagating it (such as it was) from one to another, as is evident in the Hieroglyphicks of the Egyptians, and the custom of symbols from thence derived among the Grecian Philosophers, especially the Pythagoreans. It was the solemn custom of the Egyptians to wrap up all the little knowledge they had under such mystical representations, which were unavoidably clogged with two inconveniences very unsuitable to the propagation of knowledge, which were obscurity and ambiguity : for it not only cost them a great deal of time to gather up such symbolical things which might represent their conceptions ; but when they had pitched upon them, they were liable to a great variety of interpretations, as is evident in all those remainders of them, preserved by the Industry of some ancient Writers, as in their *καμασπαί*, or golden Images of their Gods, they had ingraved two dogs, an hawk, and an Ibis. By the dogs some understood the two Hemispheres, others the two Tropicks ; by the hawk some understood the Sun, others the Equinoctial ; by the Ibis some the Moon, others the Zodiack, as is evident in Clemens,

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who reports it. This way then is a most unfit way to convey any *ancient tradition*, by being both *obscure, ambiguous, and unable to express* so much as to give any certain light to *future ages of the passages of the precedent.*

Sect. 19.

The other ways of conveying *knowledge*, are either by *speech*, or by *letters*. The first must be by some *vocal Cabala* delivered down from *Father to Son*: but *words* being of so *perishing a nature*, and *man's memory* so *weak and frail* in retaining them, it is *necessary* for a *certain communication of knowledge*, that some way should be found out more *lasting than words*, more *firm than memory*, more *faithfull than tradition*: which could not otherwise be *imagined*, than that the *Authour* of his own *conceptions* should himself *leave them to the view of all posterity*; in order to *which*, some way must be *contrived* whereby *mens voices* might be *seen*, and *mens fingers* speak. But how to *express* all kind of *sounds*, with the *several draughts of a pen*, and to *confine them within the compass of twenty-four letters*, is deservedly called by *Galileo*, *admirandarum omnium inventionum humanarum signaculum*, the *choicest of all humane inventions*. And had we no other evidence of the great *obscurity of ancient history*, the great *difference as to the first inventor of letters*, would be a *sufficient demonstration* of it. For almost every *Nation* hath had a *several Authour* of them: The *Jews* derive them from *Adam* or *Moses*; the *Egyptians* attribute their *invention* to *Thayt* or *Mercury*; the *Grecians* to *Cadmus*, the *Phœnicians* to *Taautus*, the *Latins* to *Saturn*, others to the *Æthiopians*: And lest the *Pygmies* should be without their *enemies*, some think they were found out *à gruum volatu*, from the *manner of the flying of Cranes*. Thus it hath happened with most *Nations*; what was first *among themselves*, they thought to be the *first in the world*.

Sect. 20.

But by *whomsoever* they were first *invented*, we are certain they were but *lately in use* in that *Nation*, which hath most vainly *arrogated* the most to it self in point of *Antiquity*, and yet had the least reason (I mean the *Grecians*.) Thence the *Egyptian Priest Patinet* truly told *Solon*, the *Greeks* were always *children*, because they had *nothing of the antiquities of former ages*. If we may believe *Josephus*, they had no *Writings earlier than Homer*; but herein he is conceived to have served his *cause* too much, because of the *Inscription of Amphitrio*

Procl. in Tim.  
c. App. l. 8.

Hist. l. 5.

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trio at Thebes in the Temple of Apollo Ismenius in the old *Ionick letters*, and two others of the same age to be seen in *Herodotus*, V. *Boch. Geogr.* and because of the Writings of *Lycus*, *Orpheus*, *Museus*, *Oroe-* P. 2. l. 1. c. 20.  
*bantius*, *Træzenius*, *Thaletas*, *Melesander*, and others. This we are certain of, the *Grecians* had not the use of *letters* among them'till the time of *Cadmus*, the *Phœnicians* coming into *Greece*, *Apud Phot. Bi-*  
whither he came to plant a *Colony* of *Phœnicians* there, whence *biotib. l. 37.*  
arose the story of his *pursuit* of *Europa*, as *Conon* in *Photius* tells us.

And it is very probable which *learned men* have long since observed, that the name *Cadmus* comes from the *Hebrew* קדם, and may relate as an *appellative* either to his *dignity*, as *Junius* in his *Academia* conjectures, or more probably to his *Country*, the *East*, which is frequently call'd קדם in *Scripture*. Some have conjectured further, that his proper name was עני, upon what *reason* I know not, unless from hence, that thence by a *duplication* of the word, came the *Greek* Ὠγγύς, who seems to have been no other than *Cadmus*, as will appear by comparing their stories together. Only one was the name his memory was preserved by at *Athens*, where the *Cadmeans* inhabited, as appears by the *Gephyræi*, whom *Herodotus* tells us were *Phœnicians* that came with *Cadmus*, (and others *fanſie* the *Academia* *Hist. l. 5.*  
there was originally called *Cadmea*) and the name *Cadmus* was preserved chiefly among the *Bœotians* in memory of the *Country* whence he came: It being likely to be *imposed* by them upon his first *landing* in the *Country*, as many *learned persons* conceive the name of an *Hebrew* was given to *Abraham* by the *Canaanites* upon his passing over the *River Euphrates*. On this account then it stands to reason, that the name which was given him as a *stranger*, should be longest preserved in the place where it was first *imposed*. Or if we take קדם in the other sense, as it imports *antiquity*; so there is still a higher probability of the *affinity* of the names of *Cadmus* and *Ogyges*; for this is certain, that the *Greeks* had no higher name for a matter of *Antiquity*, than to call it Ὠγγύς, as the *Scholiast* on *Hesiod*, *Hesychius*, *Suidas*, *Eustathius* on *Dionysius*, and many others observe. And which yet advanceth the *probability* higher, *Lucretius* or *Lactantius* the *Scholiast* on *Statius*, tells us, the other *Greeks* had this from the *Thebanes*; for, saith he, *Thebani* *In Theb. l. 1.*  
*res antiquas Ogygias nominabant*. But that which puts it almost  
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beyond meer probability, is, that *Varro*, *Festus*, *Pausanias*, *Apollo-nius*, *Aeschylus*, and others make *Ogyges* the Founder of the *Bæo-tian Thebes*, which were thence called *Ogygiæ*; and *Strabo* and *Stephanus περὶ πόλεων*, further say, that the whole *Country* of *Bæo-tia* was called *Ogygia*; now all that mention the Story of *Cadmus*, attribute to him the founding of the *Bæotian Thebes*. And withall it is observable, that in the *Vatican Appendix* of the

*Cent. 4. Prov. 52.* *Greek Proverbs*, we read *Cadmus* called *Ogyges*; Ὠγύμα κατὰ ὅπιν ὅς' ὀκλήσων ἐπὶ συνέσιν Κάδμον ἢ Ὠγύην διὰ τὰς θυγατέρας καλοῖς περὶ πσοῖν. *Meursius* indeed would have it corrected, Κάδμον ἢ Ὠγύγης, as it is read in *Suidas*; but by the favour of so learned a man, it seems more probable that *Suidas* should be corrected by that, he bringing no other evidence of any such person as *Cadmus* a Son of *Ogyges*, but only that reading in *Suidas*; whereas we have discovered many probable grounds to make them both the same. That which I would now infer from hence is, the utter impossibility of the *Greeks* giving us any certain account of ancient times, when a thing so modern in comparison as *Cadmus* his coming into *Greece*, is thought by them a matter of so great antiquity, that when they would describe a thing very ancient, they described it by the name of *Ogyges*, who was the same with *Cadmus*. Now *Cadmus* his coming into *Greece*, is generally, by *Historians*, placed about the time of *Joshua*, whence some (I will not say how happily) have conjectured, that *Cadmus* and his company were some of the *Canaanites* who fled from *Joshua*, as others are supposed to have done into *Africa*, if *Procopius* his pillar hath strength enough to bear such a conjecture. But there is too great a confusion about the time of *Cadmus* his arrival in *Greece*, to affirm any thing with any great certainty about it.

*De Idol. l. 1. c. 13.* Yet those who disagree from that former Computation, place it yet lower. *Vossius* makes *Agenor*, *Cadmus* his Father, co-temporary with the latter end of *Moses*, or the beginning of *Joshua*; and so *Cadmus* his time must fall somewhat after. *Jac. Capellus* placeth *Cadmus* in the third year of *Othoniel*. *Parius* the Authour of the *Greek Chronicle*, in the *Marmora Arundelliana* makes his coming to *Greece* to be in the time of *Hellen* the son of *Deucalion*; which *Capellus* fixeth on the 73. of *Moses*, *A.M.* 2995. But *Mr. Selden* conceives it somewhat lower: and so it must be, if we follow *Clemens Alexandrinus*, who placeth it in



in the time of *Lyncus* King of the *Argives*, which he saith was *ἐν δεκάτῃ γενεῇ Μωϋσέως γένεα*, in the eleventh Generation after *Moses*, which will fall about the time of *Samuel*: But though it should be so late, it would be no wonder it should be reckoned a matter of so great antiquity among the *Grecians*; for the eldest Records they have of any King at *Athens*, begin at the time of *Moses*, whose co-temporary *Cecrops* is generally thought to be; for at his time it is the *Parian Chronicle* begins. Now that the *Grecians* did receive their very letters from the *Phœnicians* by *Cadmus*, is commonly acknowledged by the most learned of the *Greeks* themselves, as appears by the ingenuous confession of *Herodotus*, *Philostratus*, *Critias* in *Athenaus*, *Zenodotus* in *Lactertius*, *Timon Phliasus* in *Sixtus Empiricus*, and many others: so that it were to no purpose to offer to prove that, which they who arrogate so much to themselves, do so freely acknowledge. Which yet hath been done to very good purpose by *Joseph Scaliger* and *Bochartus*, and many others from the form of the Letters, the order and the names of them. It seems probable that at first they might use the form of the *Phœnician Letters*, in which *Herodotus* tells us the three old Inscriptions were extant; and *Diodorus* tells us, that the brass pot which *Cadmus* offered to *Minerva Lyndia*, had an Inscription on it in the *Phœnician Letters*, but afterwards the form of the Letters came by degrees to be changed, when for their greater expedition in writing they left the old way of writing towards the left hand, for the more natural and expedite way of writing towards the right, by which they exchanged the sites of the strokes in several Letters, as is observed by the fore-cited Learned Authors.

*Strom. 1.*

*Not. in Euseb. Chron. n. 1617. Geogr. p. 3. l. 1. cap. 20.*

Not that the old *Ionick Letters* were nearer the *Phœnician*, and distinct from the modern, as *Jos. Scaliger* in his learned Discourse on the original of the *Greek Letters* conceives; for the *Ionick Letters* were nothing else but the full Alphabet of twenty-four, with the additions of *Palamedes*, and *Simonides Cous*; as *Pliny* tells us, that all the *Greeks* consented in the use of the *Ionick Letters*; but the old *Attick Letters* came nearer the *Phœnician*, because the *Athenians*, long after the Alphabet was increased to 24. continued still in the use of the old 16. which were brought in by *Cadmus*, which must needs much alter the way of writing; for in the old Letters, they writ *THEOΞ* for *Θεός*, which made *Pliny*, with a great deal of learn-

*In Euseb. n. 1617.*

*Hist. l. 7. cap. 57.*

ing

v. Maussacum  
in Harpocr.  
Salmas. in  
Consecrat.  
Templ. p. 30.

ing and truth, say, that the old Greek Letters were the same with the Roman. Thence the Greeks called their ancient Letters Ἀρχαῖα γράμματα, as appears by Harpocraton and Hesychius, not that they were so much distinct from others, but because they did not admit of the addition of the other eight Letters, which difference of writing is in a great measure the cause of the different dialect between the Athenians and Ionians properly so called.

Secl. 21.

We see then the very Letters of the Greeks were no elder than Cadmus; and for any considerable learning among them, it was not near so old. Some assert indeed that History began from the time of Cadmus; but it is by a mistake of him for a younger Cadmus, which was Cadmus Milesius, whom Pliny makes to be the first Writer in Prose; but that he after attributes to Pherecydes Syrius, and History to Cadmus Milesius: and therefore I think it far more probable, that it was some writing of this latter Cadmus, which was transcribed and epitomized by Bion Proconesius, although Clemens Alexandrinus seems to attribute it to the Elder. We see how unable then the Grecians were to give an account of elder times, that were guilty of so much infancy and nonage, as to begin to learn their Letters almost in the noon-tide of the World, and yet long after this to the time of the first Olympiad all their relations are accounted fabulous. A fair account then we are like to have from them of the first antiquities of the World, who could not speak plain truth till the World was above three thousand years old; for so it was when the Olympiads began.

Nat. hist. l. 5.  
c. 29. l. 7. c. 57.

Strom. l. 6.

So true is the observation of Justin Martyr, ἐν ἑλλήσι περ ἔσθ' Ὀλυμπιάδων ἀκρίβης ἴσθαι, the Greeks had no exact history of themselves before the Olympiads; but of that more afterwards.

This is now the first defect which doth infringe the credibility of these Histories, which is the want of timely and early records to digest their own history in.



## C H A P. II.

## Of the Phœnician and Egyptian History.

*The particular defect in the History of the most learned Heathen Nations. First the Phœnicians. Of Sanchoniathon, his Antiquity and Fidelity. Of Jerom-baal, Baal-Berith. The Antiquity of Tyre. Scaliger vindicated against Bochartus Abibalus. The vanity of Phœnician Theology. The imitation of it by the Gnosticks. Of the Egyptian History. The Antiquity and Authority of Hermes Trismegistus. Of his Inscriptions on Pillars, transcribed by Manetho. His Fabulousness thence discovered. Terra Seriadica. Of Seth's Pillars in Josephus, and an account whence they were taken.*

**H**AVING already shewed a general defect in the ancient *Heathen Histories*, as to an account of *ancient times*; we now come to a closer, and more particular consideration of the *Histories* of those several *Nations* which have born the greatest name in the world for *learning* and *antiquity*. There are four *Nations* chiefly which have pretended the most to *antiquity* in the learned world, and whose *Historians* have been thought to deliver any thing contrary to *Holy Writ* in their account of *ancient times*, whom on that account we are obliged more particularly to consider; and those are the *Phœnicians*, *Chaldeans*, *Egyptians*, and *Grecians*; we shall therefore see what evidence of *credibility* there can be in any of *these*, as to the *matter of antiquity* of their *Records*, or the *Histories* taken from them. And the *credibility* of an *Historian* depending much upon the *certainty* and *authority* of the *Records* he makes use of, we shall both consider of what *value* and *antiquity* the pretended *Records* are, and particularly look into the *age* of the several *Historians*. As to the *Grecians*, we have seen already an utter *impossibility* of having any *ancient Records* among them, because they wanted the *means* of preserving them, having so lately borrowed their *Letters* from other *Nations*. Unless as to their account of *times* they had been as *carefull* as the old *Romans* were to number their *years* by the several *clavi*, or *nails*, which they fixed on the *Temple* doors: which yet they were not in

Sect. I.

any

any capacity to do, not *growing* up in an entire body, as the *Roman Empire* did, but lying so much *scattered* and *divided* into so many petty *Republicks*, that they minded very little of concernment to the whole *Nation*. The other three Nations have deservedly a name of far greater *antiquity* than any the *Gracians* could ever pretend to; who yet were unmeasurably guilty of an impotent *affectation* of antiquity; and *arrogating* to themselves, as *growing* on their own ground, what was with a great deal of *pains* and *industry* gathered but as the *gleanings* from the *fuller harvest* of those Nations they resorted to. Which is not only *true* as to the greatest part of their *learning*, but as to the *account* likewise they give of *ancient times*; the chief and most *ancient Histories* among them being only a *corruption* of the *History* of the *elder Nations*; especially *Phœnicia* and *Agypt*: for of these two *Philo Byblius* the *Translator* of the ancient *Phœnician Historian Sanchoniathon*, saith, they were

Apud Euseb.  
præp. Evang.  
l. i. c. 8. p. 23.  
Ed. R. St.

παιδαύματα ἑξ ὧν καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ παρέλαβον ἀνθρώποι,  
The most ancient of all the Barbarians, from whom the others derived their *Theology*; which he there particularly instanceth in.

Seç. 2.

We begin therefore with the *Phœnician History*, whose most ancient and famous *Historian* is *Sanchoniathon*, so much admired and made use of by the shrewdest *antagonist* ever *Christianity* met with, the *Philosopher Porphyrius*. But therein was seen the wonderfull *Providence* of *God*, that out of this eater came forth *meat*, and out of the *Lion*, *honey*; that the most considerable *testimonies* by him produced against our *Religion*, were of the greatest *strength* to refute his own. For he being of too great *Learning* to be satisfied with the vain *pretences* of the *Gracians*, he made it his *business* to search after the most *ancient Records*, to find out somewhat in them to *confront* with the *antiquity* of the *Scriptures*; but upon his search could find none of greater *veneration* than the *Phœnician History*, nor any *Author* contending for age with this *Sanchoniathon*. Yet when he had made the most of his *Testimony*, he was fain to yield him younger than *Moses*, though he supposeth him elder than the *Trojan Wars*. And yet herein was he guilty of a most gross ἀντιστοιχία, not much exceeding the *Gracians* in his skill in *Chronology*, when he makes *Semiramis* co-existent with the *Siege of Troy*: as is evident in his *testimony* produced at large

by



by *Eusebius* out of his *fourth Book* against the *Christians*; nay, *Prep. Evang.* he goes to prove the truth of *Sanchroniathon's History* by the *L. 10. c. 8. p.* agreement of it with that of *Moses* concerning the *Jews*, <sup>285.</sup> both as to their names and places, *ἰσχυρὴ δὲ τὰ περὶ Ἰσραήλιν ἀληθεύειν ὅτι καὶ τοῖς τόποις καὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασι αὐτῶν τὰ συμφωνοῦντα*: where-by he doth evidently assert the greater Truth and Antiquity of *Moses* his History, when he proves the truth of *Sanchroniathon's* from his consonancy with that.

Two things more *Porphyrie* insists on to manifest his *credibility*; the one I suppose relates to what he reports concerning the *Jews*, the other concerning the *Phœnicians* themselves. For the first, that he made use of the Records of *Ferom-baal* the Priest of the God *Ieuo*, or rather *Iao*; for the other, that he used all the Records of the several Cities, and the sacred Inscriptions in the Temples. Who that *Ferom-baal* was, is much discussed among learned men, the finding out of which, hath been thought to be the most certain way to determine the age of *Sanchroniathon*. The learned *Bochartus* conceives him to be *Gideon*, who in Scripture is called *Ferub-baal*, which is of the same sense in the *Phœnician* language, only after their custom changing one *b* into *m*, as in *Ambubaja Sambuca*, &c. But admitting the conjecture of this learned person concerning *Ferub-baal*, yet I see no necessity of making *Sanchroniathon* and him contemporary; for I no where find any thing mentioned in *Porphyrie* implying that, but only that he made use of the Records of *Ferub-baal*, which he might very probably do at a considerable distance of time from him, whether by those *ἱστορίαι*, we mean the *Annals* written by him, or the Records concerning his actions; either of which might give *Sanchroniathon* considerable light into the history either of the *Israelites* or *Phœnicians*. And it is so much the more probable, because presently after the death of *Gideon*, the *Israelites* worshipped *Baal-Berith*; by which most probably is meant the Idol of *Berith* or *Berytus*, the place where *Sanchroniathon* lived; by which means the *Berytians* might come easily acquainted with all the remarkable passages of *Ferub-baal*. *Geogr. Sacr. p. 2. l. 2. c. 17.*

Secl. 3.

But I cannot conceive how *Sanchroniathon* could be contemporary with *Gideon*, (which yet if he were, he falls 182 years short of *Moses*.) especially because the building of *Tyre*, which that *Authour* mentions as an ancient thing (as hath been

Secl. 4.

*Not. in fragm.  
Græc. p. 40.*

*Antiq. l. 8.*

*Geogr. l. 16.*

*Hist. Nat. l. 5.  
c. 19.*

observed by Scaliger) is by our best *Chronologers* placed about the time of *Gideon*, and about 65 years before the *destruction* of *Troy*. I know *Bochartus*, to avoid this argument, hath brought some *evidence* of several places called *Tyrus* in *Phœnicia*, from *Scylax* his *Periplus*; but none, that there was any more than one *Tyrus* of any great repute for *antiquity*. Now this *Tyrus* *Josephus* makes but 240 years elder than *Solomon's Temple*, and *Justin* but one year elder than the *destruction* of *Troy*. Neither can any account be given why *Sidon* should be so much celebrated by ancient *Poets*, as *Strabo* tells us, when *Tyre* is not so much as mentioned by *Homer*, if the famous *Tyre* were of so great *antiquity* and *repute* as is pretended. It cannot be denied but that there is mention in *Scripture* of a *Tyre* elder than this we speak of, which we read of, *Joshua* 19. 29. which some think to be that which was called *Palætyrus*, which *Strabo* makes to be 30 furlongs distant from the great *Tyre*; but *Pliny* includes *Palætyrus* within the circumference of *Tyre*, and so makes the whole circuit of the City to be 19 miles. It is not to me so certain to what place the name of *Palætyrus* refers, whether to any *Tyrus* before the first building of the great *Tyre*, or to the ruins of the great *Tyre* after its destruction by *Nebuchadnezzar*, compared with the new *Tyre*, which was built more inward to the *Sea*, and was after besieged by *Alexander the Great*. It may seem probable that *Palætyrus* may relate to the ruins of the great *Tyre*, in that it was after included in its circuit, and chiefly because of the prediction in *Ezekiel* 26. 4. *Thou shalt be built no more*; for the *Tyre* erected after, was built not on the *Continent*, but almost in the *Sea*. If so, then *Palætyrus*, or the old famous *Tyrus* might stand upon a rock upon the brink of the *Continent*, and so the great argument of *Bochartus* is easily answered, which is, that after it is mentioned in *Sanchoniathon's history*, that *Hypsouranius* dwelt in *Tyre* upon the falling out between him and his brother *Ulcous*, *Ulcous* first adventured εἰς θάλασσαν ἐμῆναι, to go to sea, which, saith he, evidently manifests that the *Tyre* mentioned by *Sanchoniathon* was not the famous *Insular Tyrus*, but some other *Tyre*. This argument, I say, is now easily answered, if the famous *Tyre* before its destruction by *Nebuchadnezzar* did stand upon the *Continent*; for then it might be the old famous *Tyre* still, notwithstanding what *Sanchoniathon*



*Sanchoniathon* speaks of the first venturing to *Sea* after *Tyre* was built. So then I conceive these several *ages* agreeable to the same *Tyre*; the *first* was when it was a high strong rock on the *Sea-side* without many *inhabitants*; so I suppose it was when mentioned by *Joshua* as the bound of the tribe of *Asher*. The second Age was, when it was built a great City by the *Sidonians* upon the former place, and grew very populous and famous, which lasted 'till *Nebuchadnezzar's* time; after this, though it were never built up in the *Continent* again, yet a little farther into the *Sea*, a new and goodly City was erected, which was called *new Tyre*, and the remains on the *Continent* side *Palætyrus*. Thus far then we have made good *Scaliger's* opinion against *Bochartus*, that the famous *Sanchoniathon* is not so old as he is pretended to be.

Which will be further manifest, if that *Abibalus*, to whom *Sanchoniathon* is supposed to dedicate his *History*, were the Father to *Hiram*, co-temporary with *Solomon*, as *Jos. Scaliger* sup-  
Not. in Euseb. Chr. p. 12.  
 poseth, who was 154 years after the destruction of *Troy*. In the *Tyrian Dynasties* produced by *Scaliger* out of the *Phœnician Annals*, this *Abibalus* is the first who occurs, and is co-temporary with *David*: *Sanchoniathon* then is of no great an-  
Canon. Isag. l. 2.  
 tiquity, if this were the time he lived in. But *Bochartus* well observes, that it is not spoken of *Abibalus* King of *Tyre*, but of *Abibalus* King of *Berytus*, whom we may allow to be somewhat nearer the time of *Moses* than the other *Abibalus*, as the *Phœnician Annals* make it appear, as *Porphyrie* tells us; but yet we find his antiquity is not so great as to be able to contest with *Moses*, as *Porphyrie* himself confesseth, although we may freely acknowledge him to be far elder than any of the *Greek Historians*; which is all *Vossius* contends for, and suffi-  
De hist. Græc. l. 1. c. 1.  
 ciently proves; but we are far from yielding him co-temporary with *Semiramis*, as *Porphyrie* would have him, and yet makes him junior to *Moses*, and to live about the time of the *Trojan War*, which is to reconcile the distance of near 800 years: such miserable confusion was there in the best learned *Heathens* in their computation of ancient times.

Having thus cleared the antiquity of *Sanchoniathon*, and the *Phœnician History*, we are next to consider the fidelity of it. This *Sanchoniathon* is highly commended for, both by *Porphyrie*, and his Translator into *Greek*, *Philo Byblius*, who lived

Seet. 5.

Not. in Euseb. Chr. p. 12.

Canon. Isag. l. 2.

De hist. Græc. l. 1. c. 1.

Seet. 6.

in *Adrian's* time ; and *Theodoret* thinks his name in the *Phœnician language* signifies φιλαλήθης, which *Bochartus* endeavours to fetch from thence, and conceives the name to be given him when he set himself to write his History ; and he wisheth, and so do we, that he had been then *vir sui nominis*, and made it appear by his writing that he had been a *Lover of truth*. *Philo* saith he was ἀνὴρ πολυμαθὴς καὶ πολυπραγμων, a very learned and inquisitive man ; but either he was not so diligent to enquire after, or not so happy to light on any certain records ; or if he did, he was not over-much a *Lover of truth*, in delivering them to the World. How faithfull he was in transcribing his History from his Records, we cannot be sufficient Judges of, unless we had those books of *Taantus*, and the sacred Inscriptions, and the Records of Cities, which he pretends to take his History from, to compare them together. But by what remains of his History, which is only the first book concerning the *Phœnician Theology* extant in *Eusebius*, we have little reason to believe his History of the World and eldest times, without further proof than he gives of it, there being so much obscurity and confusion in it, when he makes a *Chaos* to be the first beginning of all things, and the Gods to come after, makes the ἀντίχθων and γήινον the Son of *Chryfor* or *Vulcan*, and again the man born of earth to be several generations after αἰὼν and πρωτόγονον, who were the first mortal men ; and yet from the two brethren πενίτης and ἀντίχθων came two Gods, whereof one was called Ἄγεός, and the other Ἄγεός τε, and this latter was worshipped with as much veneration as any of their Gods. Yet from these things, as foolish and ridiculous as they are, it is very probable the *Gnosticks* and the several subdivisions of them might take the rise of their several *Æones* and *Κυβισται* : for here we find Ἄϊων and Πρωτόγονον made two of the number of the Gods, but the rest of the names, they according to their several Sects took a liberty of altering, according to their several fancies. This is far more probable to me, than that either *Hesiod's Theogonia* should be the ground of them ; or the opinion of a late German Divine, who conceives that *Philo Byblius* did in imitation of the *Gnosticks*, form this holy story of the *Phœnician Theology*. For although I am far from believing what *Kircher* somewhere tells us, that he had once got a sight of *Sanchoniathon's Original History* (it being not the first thing that learned man hath been deceived in,) yet I see no ground of



so much *peevishness*, as because this *History* pretends to so much *antiquity*, we should therefore presently condemn it as a *figment* of the Translator of it. For had it been so, the *Antagonists* of *Porphyrus*, *Methodius*, *Apollinaris*, but especially *Eusebius*, so well versed in *antiquities*, would have found out so great a *cheat*: Although I must confess they were oft-times deceived with *pie fraudes*; but then it was when they made for the *Christians*, and not *against* them, as this did. But besides a *fabulous confusion* of things together, we have some things delivered concerning their *Gods*, which are both contrary to all natural notions of a *Deity*, and to those very common principles of *humanity*, which all acknowledge. As when *Χεὶν*, or *Saturn*, suspecting his Son *Sadidus*, destroyed him with his own hands, and warr'd against his Father *Uranus*, and after destroyed him likewise, and buried his Brother *Atlas* alive in the earth; which being taken, as *Philo Byblius* contends they ought to be, in the *literal sense*, are such *incongruities* to all notions of a *divine nature*, that it is the greatest wonder there should be any that should believe there was any *God*, and believe these were *Gods* together.

But although there be so many gross *fables* and *inconsistencies* in this *Phœnician Theology*, that are so far from meriting belief in themselves, that it were a sufficient *forfeiture* of reason to say they were *credible*; yet when we have a greater light in our hands of *divine revelation*, we may in this *dungeon* find out many *excellent remainders* of the *ancient tradition*, though miserably *corrupted*, as concerning the *Creation*, the *Original of Idolatry*, the *invention of Arts*, the *foundation of Cities*, the *story of Abraham*, of which in their due place. That which of all seems the *clearest* in this *Theology*, is the open owning the *original of Idolatry* to have been from the *consecration* of some eminent persons after their *death*, who have found out some *usefull things* for the *world* while they were living: which the *subtiller Greeks* would not admit of, *viz.* that the persons they worshipped were once *men*, which made them turn all into *Allegories* and *Mystical senses* to blind that *Idolatry* they were guilty of the better among the *ignorant*: which makes *Philo Byblius* so very angry with the *Neoterick Grecians*, as he calls them, *ὡς ἂν βελισσόμεναι καὶ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ τὰς περὶ θεῶν μύθους ἐπ' ἀλλοτροίας καὶ φουρτῆς ἀνθρώπους τε καὶ θεοὺς ἀνάγειν*: That with a great deal of force and straining they turned all the stories of the

Señ. 7.

Apud Euseb.  
Præp. l. 1. c. 6.  
p. 23.

Gods

*Gods into Allegories and Physical discourses.* Which is all the *Ingenuity* that I know is to be found in this *Phœnician Theology*, that therein we find a free acknowledgment of the beginning of the *Heathen Idolatry*: and therefore *Sanchoniathon* was as far from advancing *Porphyrie's Religion*, as he was in the least from overthrowing the *credibility of Christianity*.

Sett. 8.

The next we come to then, are the *Agyptians*; a people so unreasonably given to *fables*, that the wisest action they did, was to *conceal* their *Religion*, and the best office their *Gods* had, was to hold their *fingers* in their *mouaths*, to command *silence* to all that came to *worship* them. But we design not here any set discourse concerning the *vanity* of the *Agyptian Theology*, which yet was so monstrously ridiculous, that even those who were over-run with the height of *Idolatry* themselves, did make it the object of their scorn and laughter. And certainly had we no other demonstration of the greatness of man's *apostasie* and *degeneracy*, the *Agyptian Theology* would be an *irrefragable evidence* of it: for who could but imagine a strange lowness of spirit in those who could fall down and worship the basest and most contemptible of creatures! Their *Temples* were the best *Hieroglyphicks* of themselves, *fair* and *goodly structures* without, but within some *deformed creature* enshrined for *veneration*. But though the *Agyptians* had lost their *credit* so much as to matters of *Religion*; yet it may be supposed, that they who were so famed for *wisdom* and *antiquity*, should be able to give a *full* and *exact* account of themselves through all the *ages* of the *world*. And this they are so far from being *defective* in, that if you will believe them, they will give you an *account* of *themselves* many *thousands of years* before ever the *world* was made, but the peculiar *vanity* of their *Chronology* will be handled afterwards: That we now enquire into, is, what certain *Records* they had of their own *antiquity*, which might call for assent from any unprejudiced mind; whether there be any thing really answering that *loud* and *unparalleld cry* of *antiquity* among the *Agyptians*, whereby they will make all other *Nations* in comparison of them, *to be but of yesterday, and to know nothing*. We question not now their *pretence* to *wisdom* and *learning*, but are the more in hopes to meet with some *certain way* of *satisfaction* concerning *ancient times*, where *learning* is supposed to have flourished so much, even when *Greece* it self was accounted *barbarous*.

The



The great *Basis* of all the *Agyptian History* depends on the credit of their ancient *Hermes*, whom out of their *veneration* they called *Trisnegistus*; for to him they ascribe the first invention of their *learning*, and all excellent *Arts*; from him they derive their *history*; their famous *Historian Manetho*, professing to transcribe his *Dynasties* from the pillars of *Hermes*. We shall therefore first see of what credit and antiquity *Hermes* himself was, and of what account particularly those pillars were which hold up all the *Fabric* of *Manetho* his *Dynasties*. For *Hermes* himself, the story concerning him is so various and uncertain, that some have from thence questioned whether ever there were such a person or no, because of the strangely different account that is given of him. *Cotta* in *Tully*, in order to the establishing his *academical doctrine* of withholding assent, mentions no fewer than five *Mercuries*, of which, two he makes *Agyptian*, one of them the *Hermes* we now speak of, whom the *Agyptians* call *Thoyth*, and was the Author both of their *Laws* and *Letters*. The *Agyptians*, as appears by *Diodorus*, make him to be a sacred Scribe to *Osiris*, and to have instructed *Isis*; and when *Osiris* went upon any warlike expedition, he committed the management of affairs to him for his great wisdom. The *Phœnicians* preserve his memory among them too: for *Philo Byblius* saith, that *Sanchoniathon* described his *Theology* from the books of *Tautus*, whom the *Agyptians* call *Thoyth*, who was the first inventor of *Letters*, and was a Counsellor to *Saturn*, whose advice he much relied on. What now must we pitch upon in so great uncertainties? How come the *Phœnician* and *Agyptian Theology* to come both from the same person, which are conceived so much to differ from each other? If we make the stories of *Osiris* and *Isis* to be fabulous, and merely allegorical, as *Plutarch* doth, then *Mercury* himself must become an Allegory, and the Father of *Letters* must be an Hieroglyphick. If we admit the *Agyptians* narrations to be real, and seek to reduce them to truth, and thereby make *Osiris* to be *Mitfrain* the son of *Cham*, who first ruled in *Agypt*, all that we can then affirm of *Hermes* is, That he might be some usefull person, who had a great influence both upon the King and State, and did first settle the Nation in a politic way of government, whose memory on that account the *Agyptians* might preserve with the greatest veneration; and when

De Nat. Deor.

l. 3.

De Myst. l. 1.

when they were once fallen into that *Idolatry*, of consecrating the *memories* of the first *Contributers* to the good of *mankind*, they thought they had the greatest *reason* to adore his *memory*, and so by degrees attributed the *invention* of all *usefull things* to him. For so it is apparent they did, when *Iamblichus* tells us the *Egyptians* attributed all their books to *Mercury*, as the *Father* of them; because he was reputed the *Father* of *wis* and *learning*, they made all the off-springs of their brains to bear their *Fathers* name. And this hath been the great *reason* the world hath been so long time imposed upon with *varieties* of books going under the name of *Hermes Trismegistus*. For he was not the *first* of his *kind*, who in the early days of the *Christian* world obtruded upon the world that *Cento* or confused mixture of the *Christian*, *Platonick*, and *Egyptian* doctrine, which is extant still under the name of *Hermes Trismegistus*; whose vanity and falshood hath been sufficiently detected by learned men. There were long before his time extant several *Mercurial* books, as they were called, which none of the *wiser Heathens* did ever look on as any other than *fables* and *impostures*, as appears by *Porphyrie's* letter to *Anebo* the *Egyptian* Priest, and *Iamblichus* his answer to it in his Book of the *Egyptian Mysteries*.

Sect. 10.

We have then no certainty at all, notwithstanding the great fame of *Hermes*, of any certain *Records* of *ancient times*, unless they be contained in those *sacred inscriptions* from whence *Manetho* took his history. It must be acknowledged that the most ancient way of preserving any *monuments of learning* in those *elder times*, was by these *inscriptions* on *pillars*, especially among the *Egyptians*, as is evident from the several testimonies of *Galen*, *Proclus*, *Iamblicus*, and the Authour of the Book called *Sapientia secundum Aegyptios*, adjoynd to *Aristotle*, who all concur in this, that whatever *laudable invention* they had among them, it was *inscribed* on some *pillars*, and those preserved in their *Temples*, which were instead of *Libraries* to them. *Manetho* therefore to make his story the more *probable*, pretends to take all his *relations* from these *sacred inscriptions*; and as *Eusebius* tells us, translated the whole *Egyptian History* into *Greek*. beginning from their *Gods*, and continuing his History down near the time of *Darius Codomannus*, whom *Alexander* conquered: for in *Eusebius* his *Chronica* mention is made

Gal. l. 1. c. Iul.

c. 1.

Procl. in Tim.

P. 31.

Iamb. de myst.

c. 2. f. 1.

Sap. c. 2. f. 1.



made of *Manetho* his History, ending the 16th year of *Artaxerxes Ochus*, which, saith *Vossius*, was in the second year of the 107th Olympiad. This *Manetho Sebennyta* was High Priest *De Hist. Græc.*  
of *Heliopolis*, in the time of *Ptolomæus Philadelphus*, at whose *l. 1. c. 14.*  
request he writ his History, which he digested into three *Tomes*,  
the first containing the 11 *Dynasties of the Gods and Heroes*;  
the second, 8 *Dynasties*; the third 12, all containing, according to his fabulous computation, the summ of 53535 years. These *Dynasties* are yet preserved, being first epitomized by *Julius Africanus*, from him transcribed by *Eusebius* in his *Chronica*, from *Eusebius* by *Georgius Syncellus*, out of whom they are produced by *Jos. Scaliger*, and may be seen both in *Eusebius*, and his *Canones Isagogici*.

Now *Manetho*, as appears by *Eusebius*, voucheth this as the main testimony of his credibility, that he took his History, ἐν ᾧ ἐν τῇ Σηνιαδικῇ γῇ κειμένων σελῶν, ἱερὰ διαλέκτῳ καὶ ἱερογλυφικοῖς γράμμασι κεκαρσινευμένων ὑπὸ Θωυθ, τῷ πατρὶς Ἑρμῆ, καὶ ἱερογλυφισσῶν, καὶ τῷ Κασάλυσμον ἐν τῇ ἱερᾷ διαλέκτῳ εἰς τὴν ἑλληνίδα φωνῶν γράμμασιν ἱερογλυφικοῖς, καὶ ἀποσεισῶν ἐν βιβλοῖς ὑπὸ τῷ Ἀγαθοδαίμονι καὶ τῷ δευτέρῳ Ἑρμῆ, πατρὶς δὲ τῷ Τάτ, ἐν τοῖς ἀντίοις ᾗ ἱερῶν Αἰγυπτίων. From some pillars in the Land of *Seriad*, in which they were inscribed in the sacred dialect by the first *Mercury Tyth*, and after the flood were translated out of the sacred dialect into the Greek tongue in *Hieroglyphick Characters*, and are laid up in books among the *Revestries of the Egyptian Temples*, by *Agathodæmon*, the second *Mercury*, the Father of *Tat*. Certainly this fabulous Authour could not in fewer words have more manifested his own impostures, nor blasted his own credit more than he hath done in these; which it is a wonder so many learned men have taken so little notice of, which have found frequent occasion to speak of *Manetho* and his *Dynasties*. This I shall make appear by some great *improbabilities*, and other plain *impossibilities* which are couched in them. The *improbabilities* are, first such pillars, being in such a place as *Seriad*, and that place no more spoken of either by himself, or by any other *Egyptians*, nor any use made of these inscriptions by any other but himself. As to this *terra Seriadica* where it should be, the very learned and inquisitive *Joseph Scaliger* plainly gives out, and ingenuously professeth his ignorance. For in his notes on the fragments of *Manetho* in *Eusebius*, when he comes

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to that *ἐν τῇ γῇ Σνειαδ' αὐτῇ*, he only saith, *Quæ nobis ignota querant studiosi*. But Isaac Vossius, in his late *Discourses, De ætate mundi*, cries *εὐγενεα*, and confidently persuades himself that it is the same with *Seirah*, mentioned, *Judges 3. 16*. Indeed were there nothing else to be considered but affinity of names, it might well be the same, but that *פסילים*, which we render the *stone-quarries*, should signifie these *pillars of Mercury*, is somewhat hard to conceive. The *Seventy* render it, as himself observes, *τὰ γλυπτά*, by which they understand *graven Images*: So the word is used *2 Chron. 33. 19. Deut. 7. 5. Isa. 10. 19*. The vulgar *Latin* renders it, *ad locum Idolorum*, which were the certain *interpretation*, if *Chytraus* his conjecture were true, that *Eglon* had lately set up *Idols* there; but if it be meant of *pillars*, I cannot but approve of *Junius* his *interpretation*, which I conceive bids fairest to be the *genuine sense of the place*, viz. that these *stones* here, were the *12 stones* pitched by *Joshua* in *Gilgal* after the *Israelites* passed over *Jordan*; and these *stones* are said to be by *Gilgal*, *Judges 3. 19*. So that notwithstanding this handsome *conjecture*, we are as far to seek for the *pillars of Mercury* as ever we were, and may be so to the world's end. Secondly, the standing of these *pillars* during the *flood*, which must be supposed certainly to have some singular virtue in them to resist such a *torrent of waters*, which overthrew the strongest built houses, and most compacted *Cities*; the plain *impossibilities* are first, that *Manetho* should transcribe his *Dynasties* from the beginning of the *History of Egypt*, to almost the time of *Alexander*, out of *sacred Inscriptions of Thoyth*, who lived in the beginning of the very first *Dynasty* according to his own *computation*. Sure this *Thoyth* was an excellent *Prophet*, to write an *History* for above *50000 years* to come, as *Manetho* reckons it. Secondly, it is as well still, that this *History* after the *flood* should be translated into *Hieroglyphick Characters*; what kind of translation is that? we had thought *hieroglyphicks* had been *representations of things*, and not of *sounds and letters*, or *words*: How could this *History* have at first been written in any *tongue*, when it was in *hieroglyphicks*? Do *hieroglyphicks* speak in several *languages*, and are they capable of changing their *tongues*? But, thirdly, it is as good still, that the *second Mercury* or *Agathodæmon* did translate this *History* so soon after the *flood* into

Not. in gr. Euseb. p. 408. De at. mund. c. 10.

Josh. 4. 19, 20, 21.



into Greek: Was the Greek tongue so much in request so soon after the *floud*, that the *Agyptian History* for the sake of the *Greeks* must be translated into their language? Nay, is it not evident from *Herodotus* and *Diodorus*, that the *Grecians* were not permitted so much as any commerce with the *Agyptians*, till the time of *Psammeticus*, which fell out in the 26th Dynasty of *Manetho*, and about a Century after the beginning of the *Olympiads*. We see then how credible an Author *Manetho* is, and what truth there is like to be in the account of ancient times given by the *Agyptian Historians*, when the chief of them so lamentably and ominously stumbles in his very entrance into it.

*Herod. l. 2.  
Diod. l. c. 67.*

And yet as *fabulous* as this account is, which *Manetho* gives of his taking his *history* from these *pillars* before the *floud*, I cannot but think that *Josephus*, an Author otherwise of good credit, took his famous story of *Seth's pillars*, concerning *Astronomical observations before the floud*, from this story of *Manetho*; and therefore I cannot but look upon them with as *jealous* an eye as on the other, although I know how *fond* the world hath been upon that most *ancient monument*, as is pretended, of *learning* in the world. *Du Bartas* hath writ a whole *Poem* on these *pillars*, and the truth is, they are fitter subjects for *Poets* than any else, as will appear on these considerations. First, how strangely *improbable* is it, that the *posterity* of *Seth*, who, as is pretended, did foreknow a *destruction* of the world to be by a *floud*, should busie themselves to write *Astronomical observations on pillars*, for the benefit of those who should live after it? Could they think their *pillars* should have some peculiar *exemption* above stronger *structures*, from the *violence* of the *rough* and *furious waters*? If they believed the *floud* absolutely *universal*, for whom did they intend their *observations*? if not, to what end did they make them, when the persons surviving might *communicate* their inventions to them? But, *Secondly*, if either one or both these *pillars* remained, whence comes it to pass that neither the *Chaldeans*, nor any of the eldest Pretenders to *Astronomy*, should neither mention them, nor make any use of them? Nay, *Thirdly*, Whence came the *study* of *Astronomy* to be so lamentably *defective* in those ancient times, if they had such certain *observations* of the *heavenly bodies* gathered by so much experience of the persons who

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lived before the Floud? *Fourthly*, How comes *Josephus* himself to neglect this remarkable testimony of the truth of *Scripture-history* in his books against *Appion*, if he had thought it were such as might be relied on? *Fifthly*, How comes *Josephus* so carelessly to set down the place in *Syria* where these pillars stood, that inquisitive persons might have satisfied themselves with the sight of the pillar at least, and what kind of characters those observations were preserved in? But now, if we compare this of *Josephus* with *Manetho* his story, we shall find them so exactly resemble each other, that we may well judge all those pillars to have been taken out of the same quarry. Two things make it yet more probable: *First*, The name of the place wherein they stood, which *Eustathius* in *Hexaemeron* takes out of *Josephus*, and calls *Σηγεαδ*, the very same place with that in *Manetho*. The other is the common use of the name of *Seth* among the *Egyptians*, as not only appears by *Plutarch de Iside & Osiride*, but by this very place of *Manetho*; where it follows, ἐν βιβλῳ Σέθεν, a book of his, bearing the title which *Vettius Valens Antiochenus* tells us is not called Σέθεν, but Σήθ. Now therefore *Josephus*, who frequently useth the *Testimony of Heathen Writers*, and frequently of this *Manetho*, endeavoured to bring this fabulous relation of *Manetho* as near the truth as he could; therefore instead of *Thoth* he puts *Seth*, and the fabulous history of *Aegypt*, the inventions of the *Patriarchs*, and *Syria* instead of *Seriadica*, a Countrey too large to find these pillars in.

*Apud Scaliger.*  
*not. Gr. p. 438.*



C H A P. III.

Of the Chaldean History.

*The contest of Antiquity among Heathen Nations, and the ways of deciding it. Of the Chaldean Astrology, and the foundation of Judicial Astrology. Of the Zabii, their Founder, who they were, no other than the old Chaldees. Of Berosus and his History. An account of the fabulous Dynasties of Berosus and Manetho. From the Translation of the Scripture-history into Greek in the time of Ptolomy. Of that translation and the time of it. Of Demetrius Phalerius. Scaliger's arguments answered. Manetho writ after the Septuagint, proved against Kircher; his arguments answered. Of Rabbinical and Arabick Authours, and their little credit in matter of History. The time of Berosus enquired into; his writing co-temporary with Philadelphus.*

THE next whom our Enquiry leads us to, are the Chaldeans, a Nation of great and undoubted Antiquity, being in probability the first formed into a National Government after the Flood, and therefore the more capable of having these Arts and Sciences flourish among them, which might preserve the memory of eldest times to the view of posterity. And yet even among these who enjoyed all the advantages of ease, quiet, and a flourishing Empire, we find no undoubted or credible Records preserved, but the same vanity as among the Egyptians, in arrogating antiquity to themselves beyond all proportion of reason or satisfaction from their own history, to fill up that vast measure of time with, which makes it most probable what Diodorus observes of them, that in things pertaining to their arts they made use of Lunar years of 30 days; so they had need, when Tully tells us that they boasted of observations of the Stars for 470000 years, which after Diodorus his computation, and the vulgar account of years from the beginning of the world, will fall near upon, if not before the Creation. It had been impossible for them to have been so extravagant in their accounts of themselves, had they but preserved the History of their Nation in any certain Records. For want of which, the

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Biblioth. l. 1.

De Divin. l. 1.

tradition

*tradition of the eldest times, varying in the several families after their dispersion, and being gradually corrupted by the policy of their Leaders, and those corruptions readily embraced by the predominancy of self-love in the several Nations, thence arose those vain and eager contests between the Chaldeans, Scythians, Egyptians, and Ethiopians, concerning the antiquity of their several Nations : which may be seen in Diodorus, and others : by which it most evidently appears that they had no certain history of their own Nations : for none of them insist upon any Records, but only upon several probabilities from the nature of their Country, and the Climates they lived under. Neither need Sammeticus have been put to that ridiculous way of deciding the controversy by his two infants bred up without any converse with men, concluding the language they spake would manifest the great antiquity of the Nation it belonged to : Whereas it is more than probable they had spoken none at all, had they not learned the inarticulate voice of the goats they had more converse with than men. The making use of such ways to decide this controversy doth not only argue the great weakness of those times as to natural knowledge ; but the absolute defect and insufficiency of them, as to the giving any certain account of the state of ancient times.*

*Sect. 2.*

*Of which the Chaldeans had advantages above all other Heathen Nations, not only living in a settled Country, but in or near that very place where the grand Ancestors of the world had their chief abode and residence. Whereby we see how unfaithfull a thing Tradition is, and how soon it is corrupted or fails, where it hath no sure records to bottom its self upon. But indeed it is the less wonder that there should be a confusion of histories, where there had been before of tongues ; and that such whose design and memory God had blasted before, should afterwards forget their own original. But as if the Chaldeans had retained something still of their old aspiring mind to reach up to Heaven, the only thing they were eminent for, and which they were carefull in preserving of, was some Astronomical observations, which Tully tells us they had a great convenience for, by reason of the plain and even situation of their Country ; whereby they might have a larger prospect of the heavenly bodies, than those who lived in mountainous Countries could have. And yet even for this (which they were so famous for, that*



that the name *Chaldeans* passed for *Astrologers* in the *Roman Empire*) we have no very great reason to admire their *excellency* in it, considering how soon their *skill* in *Astronomy* dwindled into that which by a great *Catachresis* is called *judicial Astrology*. The original of which is most evident among them, as all other *Heathen Nations*, to have been from the *Divinity* which they attributed to the *Stars*; in which yet they were far more *rational* than those who now admire that *Art*: For, granting their *hypothesis*, that the *Stars* were *Gods*, it was but *reasonable* they should determine *contingent effects*; but it is far from being so with them who take away the *foundation* of all those *celestial houses*, and yet attribute the same *effects* to them, which they did, who believed a *Divinity* in them. The *Chaldeans*, as *Diodorus* relates, set 30 *Stars* under the *Planets*; *L. 2. Biblioth.* these they called *Βελαις θεῶς*; others they had as *Princes* over these, which they called *Ἰσθ θεῶν κυεῖς*; the former were as the *privy Counsellors*, and these the *Princes* over them, by whom in their courses they supposed the course of the year to be regulated. We see then what a near affinity there was between *Astrology* and the *Divinity* of the *Stars*, which makes *Ptolomy* call them *Tetrab. l. 2.* *Atheists* who condemned *Astrology*, because thereby they destroyed the main of their *Religion*, which was the *worshipping* the *Stars* for *Gods*. But it seems by *Strabo*, that one of the *Seets* of the *Chaldeans* did so hold to *Astronomy* still, that they *Geogr. l. 16.* wholly rejected *Genethliology*, which caused a great division among the *Orchoeni* and the *Borsippeni*, two *Seets* among them, so called from the places of their habitations.

And if we reckon the *Zabii* among the *Chaldeans*, as *Maimonides* seems to do, we have a further evidence of the *Planetary Deities* so much in request among the *Chaldeans*; for the description he gives of them is to this purpose, *That they* *More Novech.* *had no other Gods but the Stars to whom they made statues and* *P. 3. c. 29.* *images, to the Sun golden, to the Moon silver, and so to the rest of the Planets of the Metals dedicated to them. Those Images derived an influence from the Stars to which they were erected, which had thence a faculty of foretelling future things; which is an exact description of the* *σινχῆα* *or Talismans* so much in request among the *Heathens*; such as the *Palladium* of *Troy* is supposed by learned men to have been. These *Talismans* are by the *Jews* called *David's bucklers*, and are much of the same *nature* *p. Scaliger. ep. ad Casaub. & ep. Gallic. Selden de Diis Syriis, l. 1. c. 2. Salmas. de An. Climac. p. 578.*

nature with the ancient *Teraphim*, both being accurately made according to the *positions* of the *heavens*; only the one were to *fore-tell* future things, the other for the *driving* away some *calamity*. Concerning these *Zabii*, *Maimonides* tells us, that the *understanding* their *rites* would give a great deal of light to *several passages* of *Scripture* which now lie in *obscurity*: but little is supposed to be yet further known of them than what *Scaliger* hath said, that they were the more *Eastern Chaldeans*, which he fetcheth from the *signification* of the word; several of their books are extant, saith *Scaliger*, among the *Arabians*, but none of them are yet *discovered* to the *European World*. *Salmasius* thinks these *Zabii* were the *Chaldeans* inhabiting *Mesopotamia*, to which it is very consonant which *Maimonides* saith, that *Abraham* had his education among them. Said *Batricides*, cited by *Mr. Selden*, attributes the original of their religion to the time of *Nahor*, and to *Zaradchath* the *Persian* as the *Authour* of it, who is conceived to be the same with *Zoroaster*, who in all probability is the same with the *Zertooft* of the *Persees*, a Sect of the ancient *Persians* living now among the *Banyans* in the *Indies*. These give a more full and exact account concerning the *original*, *birth*, *education*, and *enthusiasms*, or *revelations* of their *Zertooft*, than any we meet with in any *Greek Historians*; three books they tell us of which *Zertooft* received by *Revelation*, or rather one book, consisting of three *several tracts*, whereof the first was concerning *judicial Astrology*, which they call *Astodeger*; the second concerning *Physick*, or the knowledge of *natural things*; the third was called *Zertooft*, from the bringer of it, containing their religious rites; the first was committed to the *Jesopps*, or *Magi's*, the second to *Physicians*, the third to the *Daroes* or *Church-men*, wherein are contained the several precepts of their Law; we have likewise the rites and customs of these *Persees* in their worship of fire, with many other particular rites of theirs published some time since by one *Mr. Lord*, who was a long time resident among them at *Surrat*; by which we may not only understand much of the *Religion* of the ancient *Persians*, but if I mistake not, somewhat of the *Zabii* too. My reasons are, because the ancient *Zaradcha* or *Zoroaster* is by *Said Batricides* made the *Authour* of the *Zabii*, as we have seen already, who was undoubtedly the founder of the *Persian worship*,

De jure nat. &  
gent. l. 2. c. 7.



ship, or rather a promoter of it among the *Persians*; For *Ammianus Marcellinus* tells us that he was instructed in the *Hist. l. 23.* rites of the *Chaldeans*, which he added to the *Persian* rites; besides, their agreement in the chief point of *Idoltry*, the worship of the *Sun*, and consequently the *πυραδία* or *Symbol of the Sun*, the *eternal fire*, is evident; which as far as we can learn, was the great and most early *Idoltry* of the Eastern Countries; and further we find God in *Leviticus* 26. 30. threatening to destroy their *המניכס* *their Images of the Sun*, some render it; but most probably by that word is meant the *πυραδία*, the *hearths* where they kept their perpetual fire, for those are *המנים* from *חמה*, which is used both for the *Sun* *V. Voss. Idol. l. 2. c. 9.* and *Fire*. Now hence it appears that this *Idoltry* was in use among the Nations about *Palestine*; else there had been no need of so severe a *threatning* against it, and therefore most probably the rites of the *Zabii* (which must help us to explain the reasons of some particular positive precepts in the *Levitical Law* relating to *Idoltry*) are the same with the rites of the *Chaldeans* and *Persians*, who all agreed in this worship of the *Sun* and *Fire*; which may be yet more probable from what *Maimonides* saith of them, that *Gens Zabæa erat gens quæ implevit totum orbem*; it could not be then any obscure Nation, but such as had the largest spread in the *Eastern Countries*, which could be no other than the ancient *Chaldeans*, from whom the *Persians* derived their worship. It may not seem altogether improbable that *Balaam* the famous *South-sayer* was one of these *Zabii*, especially if according to *Salmasius* his judgment they inhabited *Mesopotamia*; for *Balaam's* Country seems to be there; for it is said, *Numb. 22. 5.* that he dwelt in *Pethor* by the river, i. e. saith the *Chaldee Paraphrast*, in *Peor* of *Syria* by *Euphrates*, which in Scripture is called the river, *Esā. 8. 7.* But from this great *obscurity* as to the *history* of so ancient and so large a people as these *Zabii* are supposed to be, we have a further evidence to our purpose of the defectiveness and insufficiency of the Eastern Histories as to the giving any full account of themselves and their own original.

We are told indeed by some, that *Nabonasser* did burn and destroy all the ancient Records of the *Chaldeans* which they had diligently preserved amongst them before, on purpose to

raise the greater reputation to himself, and blot out the *memory* of his *usurpation*, by burning the *Records* of all their own *ancient Kings*. Which is a *conceit* I suppose hath no other ground than that the famous *Ara* so much celebrated by *Astronomers* and others, did bear the name of *Nabonasser*. Which (if we should be so greedy of all empty *conjectures* which tend to our purpose as to take them for *truths*) would be a very strong *evidence* of the *falsehood* and *vanity* of the *Chaldeans* in their great *pretences* to *antiquity*. But as the *case* stands in reference to their *History*, we find more *evidence* from *Scripture* to assert their *just antiquity*, than ever they are able to produce out of any *undoubted records* of their own. Which yet hath been endeavoured by an *Authour* both of some *credit* and *antiquity*, the true *Berosus*, not the *counterfeit* of *Annius*, whose *vizard* we shall have occasion to pull off afterwards. This *Berosus* was, as *Josephus* and *Tatianus* assure us, a *Priest* of *Belus* and a *Babylonian* born, but afterwards flourished in the *Isle* of *Co*, and was the first who brought the *Chaldean Astrology* in request among the *Greeks*; in honour to whose name and *memory*, the *Athenians* (who were never backward in applauding those who brought them the greatest *news*, especially if suitable to their former *superstition*) erected a statue for him with a *gilded tongue*. A good emblem of his *History*, which made a fair and *specious shew*, but was not that within, which it pretended to be: especially where he pretends to give an account of the most *ancient times*, and reckons up his two *Dynasties* before the time of *Belus*: but of them afterwards. It cannot be denied but some *fragments* of his *history*, which have been preserved from *ruine* by the care and industry of *Josephus*, *Tatianus*, *Eusebius* and others, have been very usefull, not only for proving the *truth* of the *history* of *Scripture* to the *Heathens*; but also for illustrating some passages concerning the *Babylonian Empire*: as making *Nabopolasser* the *Father* of *Nebucadonosor*, of which *Scaliger* hath fully spoken in his notes upon his fragments.

G. App. l. i.  
c. Græcor.

Append. ad l.  
de Emend. Temp.

Seft. 5.

Far be it from me to derogate any thing even from *prophane histories*, where they do not enterfere with the *sacred History* of *Scripture*; and it is certainly the best *improvement* of these to make them draw water to the *Sanctuary*, and to serve as smaller *Stars* to conduct us in our way, when we cannot enjoy the benefit



ness of that greater *light of sacred History*. But that which I impeach these *prophane histories* of, is only an *insufficiency* as to that *account of ancient times*, wherein they are so far from giving *light* to *sacred Records*, that the *design* of *setting* of them up seems to be for *casting* a *cloud* upon them. Which may seem somewhat the more *probable* in that those *monstrous accounts* of the *Agyptian* and *Chaldean Dynasties* did never publicly appear in the world in the *Greek Tongue*, 'till the time that our *sacred Records* were *translated* into *Greek* at *Alexandria*. For 'till that time when this *authentick history* of the world was drawn forth from its *privacy* and *retirement*, (being as it were *lockt* up before among the *Israelites* at *Judæa*) into the publick notice of the world about the time of *Ptolomeus Philadelphus*, these vain *pretenders* to *antiquity* thought not themselves so much concerned to stand up for the credit of their own *Nations*. For 'till that time the *credulous world*, not being acquainted with any certain report of the *creation* and *propagation* of the world, was apt to swallow any thing that was given forth by those who were had in so great esteem as the *Chaldean* and *Agyptian Priests* were: Because it was supposed that those *persons* who were freed from other *avocations*, had more *leisure* to *inquire* into these things; and because of their *mysterious* hiding what they had from the *vulgar*, were presumed to have a great deal more than they had. But now when the *Sun* of *righteousness* was *approaching* this *Horizon* of the world, and in order to that the *sacred History* like the *day-star* was to give the world notice of it, by which the former *shadows* and *mists* began to *fly* away, it concerned all those whose *interest* lay in the former *ignorance* of mankind, as much as they could to *raise* all their *ignes fatui*, and whatever might tend to *obscure* that *approaching light*, by *invalidating* the *credit* of that which came to *bespeak* its *acceptance*.

It is very *observable* to consider what *gradations* and *steps* there were in the world to the *appearance* of that *grand light* which came down from *heaven* to direct us in our way thither; how the world not long before was *awakened* into a greater *inquisitiveness* than ever before, how *knowledge* grew into *repute*, and what *methods* *divine providence* used to give the *inquisitive world* a *tast* of *Truth* at present to stay their

Señ. 6.

stomachs, and prepare them for that further discovery of it afterwards. In order to this that Nation of the Jews which was an inclosed garden before, was now thrown open, and many of the plants removed and set in Foreign Countries, not only in Babylon (where even after their return were left three famous Schools of learning, Sora, Pumbeditha, and Neharda, but in Egypt too, where multitudes of them by Alexander's favour were settled at Alexandria, where they had opportunity to season those two great fountains, whence the current of knowledge ran into the rest of the world. And now it was not in Jewry only that God was known, but he whose name was great in Israel, did make way for the knowledge of himself among all the Nations of the earth. And that All-wise God who directed the Magi by a star to Christ, making use of their former skill in Astronomy to take notice of that star which came now on a peculiar errand to them to lead them to their Saviour (The great God condescending so far to mankind, as to take advantage of particular inclinations, and to accommodate himself to them; for which purpose it is very observable that he appeared in another way to the wise men, than to the poor Shepherds) the same God made use of the curiosity and inquisitiveness after knowledge, which was in Ptolemaeus Philadelphus (which he is so much applauded for by Athenæus and others) to bring to light the most advantageous knowledge which the world ever had before the coming of Christ in the flesh. And that great Library of his erecting at Alexandria did never deserve that title till it had lodged those sacred Records, and then it did far better than the old one of Osymanduas, of which Historians tell us this was the Inscription *Ἱερῶν ψυχῶν*. The shop of the souls Physick.

V. Casaub. ad.  
in Athenæum,  
l. 5. c. 9.

Self. 7.

But this being a matter of so much concernment in order to our better understanding the original of these vast accounts of time among the Chaldeans and Egyptians, and a subject not yet touched by any, we shall a little further improve the probability of it, by taking a more particular account of the time when the Scriptures were first translated, and the occasion might thereby be given to these Egyptians and Chaldeans to produce their fabulous account into the view of the world. Whether the Scriptures had been ever before translated into the Greek language, (though it be asserted by some ancient



ancient *Writers* of the *Church*,) is very *questionable*, chiefly upon this *account*, that a sufficient *reason* cannot be assigned of undertaking a new *translation* at *Alexandria* if there had been any extant before. Especially if all those *circumstances* of that *translation* be true which are commonly received and delivered down to us with almost an *unanimous consent* of the *persons* who had greater *advantages* of knowing the *certainty* of such things, than we can have at this great *distance* of time. And therefore certainly every petty *conjecture* of some *modern*, though *learned* men, ought not to bear *sway* against so unanimous a *tradition* in a *matter* of *fact*, which cannot be capable of being proved but by the *testimony* of former ages. And it is somewhat strange that the single testimony of one *Hermippus* in *Diogenes Laertius* (whose age and authority is somewhat doubtfull) concerning only one particular referring to *Demetrius Phalerens*, should be thought of force enough among persons of *judgment* as well as *learning*, to infringe the *credibility* of the whole *story* delivered with so much *consent*, not only by *Christian*, but *Jewish Writers*; the testimony of one of which (every whit as considerable as *Hermippus*) viz. *Aristobulus Judæus* a *Peripatetical Philosopher* in an *Epistle* to *Ptolomy Philometor* doth plainly assert that which was so much questioned, concerning *Demetrius Phalerens*. Vit. Demetrii.  
Apud Euseb.  
præp. Evang.  
l. 13.

But whatever the *truth* of all the particular *circumstances* be, which I here *enquire* not after, nor the *authority* of that *Aristeus* from whom the *story* is received, nor whether this *translation* was made by *Jews* sent out of *Judæa*, or by *Jews* residing at *Alexandria*; it sufficeth for our purpose that this *translation* was made before either the *Chaldean Dynasties* of *Berosus*, or the *Egyptian* of *Manetho*, were published to the *World*. In order to which it is *necessary* to shew in what time this *translation* was effected; and herein that *channel* of *tradition* which conveys the *truth* of the *thing* in one certain *course*, runs not with so even a *stream* concerning the exact *time* of it; all indeed agree that it was about the time of *Ptolomæus Philadelphus*, but in what *years* of his *reign*, is very dubious. *Joseph Scaliger* who hath troubled the *waters* so much concerning the particular *circumstances* of this *translation*, yet fully agrees that it was done in the time of Sect. 8.  
Animad. ad  
Num. Euseb.  
of 1734.

of *Ptolomæus Philadelphus*; only he contends with *Africanus* that it should be done in the 132d. Olympiad, which is in the 33d. year of *Ptolomæus Philadelphus*; but *Eusebius* and *Jerom* place it in the very beginning of his reign, which I think is far more probable, and that in the time when *Ptolomæus Philadelphus* reigned with his Father *Ptolomæus Lagi*: for so it is most certain he did for two years before his father's death. By which means the great difficulty of *Scaliger* concerning *Demetrius Phalereus* is quite taken off; for *Hermippus* speaks nothing of *Demetrius* his being out of favour with *Philadelphus* during his father's life, but that upon his father's death, he was banished by him, and dyed in his banishment; so that *Demetrius* might have the oversight of the Library at *Alexandria*, and be the main instrument of promoting this translation, and yet those things be after true which *Hermippus* speaks, viz. When *Ptolomæus Lagi* or *Soter* was now dead. For it stands not to reason that during his father's life *Philadelphus* should discover his displeasure against *Demetrius*, it being conceived upon the advice given to his father for preferring the Sons of *Arfinoe* to the Crown before the Son of *Berenice*. Most likely therefore it is that this translation might be begun by the means of *Demetrius Phalereus* in the time of *Philadelphus* his reigning with his father, but, it may be, not finished till after the death of *Soter*, when *Philadelphus* reigned alone. And by this now we can perfectly reconcile that difference which is among the fathers concerning the time when this translation was made. For *Irenæus* attributes it to the time of *Ptolomæus Lagi*. *Clemens Alexandrinus* questions whether in the time of *Lagi* or *Philadelphus*; the rest of the Chorus carry it for *Philadelphus*; but the words of *Anatolius* in *Eusebius* cast it fully for both; for there, speaking of *Aristobulus*, he saith, he was one of the Seventy who interpreted the Scriptures to *Ptolomæus Philadelphus* and his Father, and dedicated his Commentaries upon the Law to both those Kings. *Hæc sane omnem scrupulum eximunt*, saith *Vossius* upon producing this testimony, this puts it out of all doubt; and to the same purpose speaks the learned Jesuite *Petavius* in his Notes on *Epiphanius*.

Having thus far cleared the time when the translation of the Scriptures into Greek was made, we shall find our conjecture much strengthened, by comparing this with the age of the fore-

*V. Scaliger. ib.*  
*Theocrit. Schol.*  
*ad Idol. 17.*  
*Justin. l. 16.*  
*Euseb. Chr. gr.*

*Hist. Eccl. l. 7.*  
*c. 26.*

*De Hist. Græc.*  
*l. 1. cap. 12.*  
*pag. 380.*  
*Seçt. 9.*



fore-mentioned *Historians*, *Manetho* and *Berosus*. *Manetho* we have already made appear to have lived in the time of *Ptolemaus Philadelphus*, and that, saith *Vossius*, after the death of *Soter*. It is evident from what remains of him in *Eusebius* his *Chronica*, that he not only flourished in the time of *Philadelphus*, but writ his *history* at the special command of *Philadelphus*, as manifestly appears by the remaining *Epistle* of *Manetho* to him, still extant in *Eusebius*. This command of *Phi-*  
*ladelphus* might very probably be occasioned upon the view of that account, which the *Holy Scriptures*, being then translated into *Greek*, did give of the world, and the propagation of mankind; upon which, we cannot imagine but so inquisitive a person as *Philadelphus* was, would be very earnest to have his curiosity satisfied, as to what the *Egyptian Priests* (who had boasted so much of antiquity) could produce to confront with the *Scriptures*. Whereupon the task was undertaken by this *Manetho*, High-Priest of *Heliopolis*, whereby those things which the *Egyptian Priests* had to that time kept secret in their *Cloisters*, were now divulged and exposed to the judgment of the learned world; but what satisfaction they were able to give inquisitive minds, as to the main *ἐκείνων*, or, matter enquired after, may partly appear by what hath been said of *Manetho* already, and by what shall be spoken of his *Dynasties* afterwards.

But all this will not persuade *Kircher*; for, whatever *Scaliger*; nay, what *Manetho* himself saith to the contrary, he, with the confidence and learning of a *Jesuite*, affirms, That this *Manetho* is elder than *Alexander the great*. For these are his words, *Frequens apud priscos historicos Dynastiarum Egyptiacarum fit mentio, quarum tamen alium Authorem non habemus nisi Manethonem Sebennytam, Sacerdotem Egyptium, quem ante tempora Alexandri, quicquid dicat Scaliger, in Egypto floruisse comperio*. Certainly some more than ordinary evidence may be expected after so confident an affirmation; but whatever that person be in other undertakings, he is as unhappy a person in *Philology*, as any that have pretended so much acquaintance with it. One would think, he that had been twenty years, as he tells us himself, courting the *Egyptian Mysteries* for compassing his *Oedipus*, should have found some better arguments to prove an assertion of this nature, than merely the testimony of

*Oedip. Egypt.*  
*To. 1. Synag. 1*  
*c. 9.*

of *Josephus*, the *Hebrew book Juchasin*, and some *Arabick writers*, not one of all which do mention the thing they are brought for, viz that *Manetho was elder than Alexander*. All the business is, they quote him as an *ancient Writer*; but what then? The Author of the Book *Juchasin* was *Abraham Zachuth*, a *Jew of Salamancha*, who writ in the year of our Lord 1505. and this Book was first printed at *Constantinople*, 1556. Might not this man then well mention *Manetho* as an *ancient Writer*, if he flourished above 1600 years before him, in the time of *Ptolomæus Philadelphus*? And what if some *Arabick Writers* mention him? Are they of so great antiquity and credit themselves, that it is an evidence *Manetho* lived in *Alexander's* time to be praised by them? It would be well, if *Kircher*, and other *learned men*, who think the world is grown to so great *stupidity*, as to believe every thing to be a *jewel* which is *far fetched*, would first assert and vindicate the *antiquity* and *fidelity* of their *Arabick Authors*, such as *Gelaldinus*, *Abenephi*, and many others, before they expect we should part with our more authentic *Records of History* for those *fabulous relations* which they are so full fraught withall. Were it here any part of my present business, it were an easie matter so to lay open the *ignorance*, *falsity*, and *fabulousness* of those *Arabians* whom that *Author* relies so much upon, that he could not be freed from a design to *impose* upon the world, who makes use of their *testimony* in matters of ancient times without a *Caveat*. I know none fit to believe these *Arabick Writers* as to these things, but those who have faith enough to concoct the *Rabbins* in matter of *History*. Of whom

*C. Celsus*, l. 2. *Origen* saith, *μὴντα δὲ τῶν Ἰουδαίων τῶν νῦν μὲντοι καὶ λέγουσι*. Who are, as *Grotius* truly saith, *pejssimi historię Magistri*; nam ex quo patria expulsi sunt, omnis apud illos historia crassis erroribus & fabulis est inquinata, quibus & proinde nihil credendum est, nisi aliunde testes accederent. And, as *Is. Casaubon* palleth this sharp, but due censure upon them, *Rabbini ubi de Lingua Hebraica agitur & vocis alicujus proprietate, vel aliquo Talmudico instituto, merito à Christianis tribui non parum; ubi vero à verbis venit ad res, aut ad historiam, vel rerum antiquarum veteris populi explicationem, n si falli & decipi volumus, nihil admendum esse illis fidei habendum. Sexcentis argumentis hoc facile probarem si id nunc agerem*. And in reference to their ancient

rites

*C. Celsus*, l. 2.  
*Annot. in Mat.*  
 24. 24.

*Exercit. ad Ba-*  
*ron. 16. S. 8.*



rites as well as history, *Joseph Scaliger* hath given this verdict. *De Emend. Temp. l. 6.*  
of them, *Manifesta est Judæorum inscitia, qui cum usu veterum rituum, etiam eorum cognitionem amiserunt, ut multa quæ ad eorum sacra & historiam pertinent, longe melius nos teneamus quam ipsi.* The same which these very learned persons say of *Rabbinical*, may with as much truth be said of these *Arabick* Writers, in matters of *ancient history*, which I have here inserted, to shew the reason why I have thought the *testimony* of either of these two sorts of persons so *inconsiderable* in the matter of our future discourse; which being *historical*, and that of the greatest *antiquity*, little relief is to be expected from either of them in order thereto. But to return to *Kircher*. It is freely granted, That *Josephus*, an Authour of *credit* and *age*, sufficient to give his opinion in this case, doth very frequently cite *Manetho* in his *Egyptian History*; particularly in his learned *Books* against *Appion*; but where he doth give the least intimation of *Manetho* being elder than *Alexander*, I am yet to seek. But *Kircher* will not yet leave the matter so, but undertakes to give an account of the mistake; which is, That there were two *Manetho's* besides, and both *Egyptians*, mentioned by *Suidas*; one a *Mendesian*, who writ of the *Preparation* of the *Egyptian* *ἄρωμα*, a kind of perfume used by the *Egyptian* *Priests*. The other a *Diospolitan*, who writ some *Physiological* and *Astronomical* Treatises, whose works he hears are preserved in the *Duke of Florence* his *Library*; and this was he (saith he) who lived in the *times* of *Augustus*, whom many by the *equivocation* of the name have confounded with the ancient *Writer* of the *Egyptian* *Dynasties*. Is it possible so learned a *Jesuite* should discover so little judgment in so few words? For, *first*, who ever asserted the *Writer* of the *Dynasties* to have lived in the time of *Augustus*? Yet, *secondly*, if that *Manetho* whom *Suidas* there speaks of, lived in *Augustus* his time according to *Kircher*, then it must necessarily follow, that the *Compiler* of the *Dynasties* did: for it is evident to any one that looks into *Suidas*, that he there speaks of the same *Manetho*, for these are his words: *Μανεδῶς ἐν Διοσπόλει τῇ Αἰγύπτῳ, ἢ Σεβεννύτις φυσιολογικῶς, &c.* Can any thing be more plain than that he here speaks of *Manetho Sebennytæ*, who was the *Authour* of the *Dynasties*, though he might write other things besides, of which *Suidas* there speaks? But

*Kircher* very wisely, in translating *Suidas* his words, leaves out *Σελευνίτης*, which decides the *controversie*, and makes it clear; that he speaks of the same *Manetho* of whom we have been discoursing. Thus it still appears that this *Manetho* is no elder than the time of *Ptolomy Philadelphus*, which was the thing to be proved.

*Scit. 10.* Now for *Berosus*, although the *Chaldeans* had occasion enough given them before this time, to produce their Antiquities by the *Jews* converse with them in *Babylon*; yet we find this Author the *first* who durst adventure them abroad, such as they were, in *Greek*. Now that this *Berosus* published his History after the time mentioned, I thus prove. *Tatianus Assyrius* tells us that he writ the *Chaldaick History* in three Books, and dedicated them to *Antiochus*, τῷ Ἀντίοχῳ Σελευκῶν τρίτῳ, as it is read in the fragment of *Tatianus* preserved in *Eusebius*; but it must be acknowledged that in the *Paris* edition of *Tatianus*, as well as the *Basil*, it is thus read, καὶ Ἀλέξανδρον γυμνάσιον, Ἀντίοχῳ τῷ κατ' αὐτὸν τρίτῳ, here it relates to the *third* from *Alexander*, in the other, to the *third* from *Seleucus*; Now if we reckon the *third* so as to take the person from whom we reckon in, for the first, according to the reading in *Eusebius*, it falls to be *Antiochus* called *Σειδς*, according to the other reading it falls to be *Antiochus Soter*; for *Seleucus* succeeded *Alexander* in the Kingdom of *Syria*; *Antiochus Soter*, *Seleucus*; *Antiochus Σειδς*, *Antiochus Soter*. But according to either of these readings, our purpose is sufficiently proved. For *Antiochus Soter* began to reign in *Syria* in the *sixth* year of *Ptol. Philadelphus* in *Egypt*; *Antiochus Σειδς* succeeded him in the *22d.* year of *Philadelphus*; now the soonest that the History of *Berosus* could come forth, must be in the reign of *Antiochus Soter*, which according to our accounts is some competent time after the translation of the Scripture into *Greek*; but if it were not till the time of *Antiochus Σειδς*, we cannot but imagine that the report of the account of ancient times in the Scriptures was sufficiently divulged before the publishing of this History of *Berosus*; and, it may be, *Berosus* might somewhat sooner than others understand all transactions at *Alexandria*, because the place of his chief residence was where *Ptolomy Philadelphus* was born, which was in the *Isle of Co.* But *Vossius* goes another way to work, to prove the time of *Berosus*, which

*Prap. Evang.*  
*l. 10. p. 289.*  
*ed. Rob. Steph.*

*V. Scal. de E-*  
*mend. Temp.*  
*l. 5. p. 392.*

*De hist. Græc.*  
*l. 1. c. 13.*



which is this. He quotes it out of *Pliny* that *Berosus* recorded the History of 480. years, which, *saith he*, must be reckoned from the æra of *Nabonasser*. Now this began in the second year of the 8th. *Olympiad*, from which time if we reckon 480 years, it falls upon the latter end of *Antiochus Soter*; and so his History could not come out before the 22d. of *Ptolomy Philadelphus*, or very little before. Thus we have made it evident, That these two great *Historians* are younger even than the translation of the *Bible* into *Greek*, by which it appears probable that they were provoked to publish their *fabulous Dynasties* to the world. And so much to shew the insufficiency of the *Chaldean History*, as to the account of ancient times: Which we shall conclude with the censure of *Strabo*, a grave and judicious Authour, concerning the *antiquities* of the *Persians*, *Medes*, and *Syrians*, which, *saith he*, have not obtained any great credit in the world, διὰ τὴν ἁπλοῦς ἀπλοῦς. *Geogr. l. 11.* *ἁπλοῦς καὶ ἀπλοῦς*, because of the simplicity and *fabulousness* of their *Historians*. From hence we see then that there is no great credibility in those Histories, which are impeached of falshood by the most grave and judicious of *Heathen Writers*.

## C H A P. IV.

The defect of the *Grecian* History.

*That manifested by three evident arguments of it. 1. The fabulousness of the Poetical age of Greece. The Antiquity of Poetry. Of Orpheus and the ancient Poets. Whence the Poetical Fables borrowed. The advancement of Poetry and Idolatry together in Greece. The different censures of Strabo and Eratosthenes concerning the Poetical age of Greece ; and the reasons of them. 2. The eldest Historians of Greece are of suspected credit. Of Damastes, Aristeus, and others ; of most of their eldest Historians we have nothing left but their names, of others only the subjects they treated of, and some fragments. 3. Those that are extant either confess their Ignorance of eldest times, or plainly discover it. Of the first sort are Thucydides and Plutarch ; several evidences of the Grecians Ignorance of the true original of Nations. Of Herodotus and his mistakes ; the Greeks Ignorance in Geography discovered, and thence their insufficiency as to an account of ancient History.*

*Señ. 1.*

**D**ESCEND we now to the History of Greece ; to see whether the *Metropolis* of Arts and Learning can afford us any account of ancient times, that may be able to make us in the least question the account given of them in *sacred Scriptures*. We have already manifested the defect of Greece as to letters and ancient records, but yet it may be pretended that her *Historians* by the excellency of their wits and searching abroad into other Nations, might find a more certain account of ancient times, than other Nations could obtain. There is no body, who is any thing acquainted with the *Grecian* humour, but will say they were beholding to their wits for most of their Histories ; they being some of the earliest writers of *Romances* in the world, if all *fabulous narrations* may bear that name. But laying aside at present all their *Poetick Mythology*, as it concerns their Gods, ( which we may have occasion to enquire into afterwards ) we now examine only their *credibility*, where they pretend to be most *historical*. Yet how far



far they are from meriting belief even in these things, will appear to any that shall consider; First, *That their most ancient Writers were Poetical and apparently fabulous.* Secondly, *That their eldest Historians are of suspected credit even among themselves.* Thirdly, *That their best Historians either discover or confess abundance of ignorance as to the history of ancient times.* First, *That their first Writers were Poetical, and apparently fabulous:* Strabo undertakes to prove that Prose is only an imitation of Poetry, and so Poetry must needs be first written. For, saith he, at first Poetry was only in request, afterwards in imitation of that, Cadmus, Pherecydes and Hecataeus writ their histories, observing all other laws of Poetry, but only the measures of it; but by degrees Writers began to take greater liberty, and so brought it down from that lofty strain it was then in, to the form now in use: as the Comical strain is nothing else but a depressing the sublimer style of Tragedies. This he proves because ἄδον did anciently signifie the same with ποιεῖν; for Poems were only λόγῳ μεμελισμένοι, Lessons fit to be sung among them; thence, saith he, is the original of the ῥαψῳδία, &c. For these were those Poems which were sung ἐν ῥαβδῳ when they held a branch of Laurel in their hands, as Plutarch tells us they were wont to do Homer's Iliads; others were sung to the Harp, as Hesiod's ἔργα: besides, saith Strabo, that Prose is called ὁ περὶ τοὺς λόγους, argues that it is only a bringing down of the higher strain in use before. But however this were in general, as to the Grecians, it is evident that Poetry was first in use among them; for in their elder times when they first began to creep out of Barbarism, all the Philosophy and Instruction they had, was from their Poets, and was all couched in verse; which Plutarch not only confirms, but particularly instanceth in Orpheus, Hesiod, Parmenides, Xenophanes, Empedocles and Thales; and hence Horace de arte Poetica, of the ancient Poets before Homer,

Geogr. l. 1.

Sympos.

De Pyth. Orac.

— fuit hæc sapientia quondam  
Publica privatis secernere, sacra profanis:  
Concubitu prohibere vago: dare jura maritis:  
Oppida moliri: leges incidere ligno.  
Sic honor & nomen divinis vatibus atque  
Carminibus venit.

From

*Dissert. in Hes.  
cap. 6.*

From hence as *Heinsius* observes, the *Poets* were anciently called *Διδασκαλοι*; and the ancient *speeches* of the *Philosophers* containing matters of *morality*, were called *ἄσματα καὶ ἀδίδακτα*, of which many are mentioned in their *lives* by *Diogenes Laertius*; in the same sence were *Carmina* anciently used among the *Latines* for *precepts* of *morality*, as in that collection of them, which goes under the name of *Cato*, (which some think to be an ancient piece, but with a false inscription, but *Boxhornius* thinks it to be of some *Christians* doing in the decay of the *Roman Empire*;) *Si Deus est animus, nobis ut Carmina dicunt. Carmina*, saith *Heinsius*, i. e. *dicta Philosophorum*; *causa est, quia dicta illa brevia, quibus sententias suas de Deo deque reliquis includebant, ἀδίδακτα dicebant*, i. e. *Carmina*.

*Quæst. Rom.  
c. 14.*

Señ. 2.

*Geogr. l. i. p. 13.*

When *Poetry* came first into request among the *Grecians*, is somewhat uncertain; but this is plain and evident, that the intention of it was not meerly for instruction, but as *Strabo* expresseth it, *δημαγωγῆν καὶ σεβητῆρῆν τὰ πλῆθῃ*, the more gently to draw the people on to *Idolatry*. For as he saith, it is impossible to persuade women and the promiscuous multitude to religion by meer dry reason or *Philosophy*, ἀλλὰ δεῖ καὶ διὰ θεοειδαιμῶνίας τῶτο δ' ἐκ ἀνθρώπων μυθοποιίας καὶ περτείας; but for this, saith he, there is need of *superstition*, and this cannot be advanced without some fables and wonders. For, saith he, the *Tunderbelts*, *Shields*, *Tridents*, *Serpents*, *Spears* attributed to the *Gods*, are meer fables, and so is all the ancient *Theology*; but the *Governours* of the *Commonwealth* made use of these things, the better to awe the silly multitude, and to bring them into better order. I cannot tell how far this might be their end, since these things were not brought in so much by the several *Magistrates*, as by the endeavour of particular men, who thought to raise up their own esteem among the vulgar by such things, and were employed by the great deceiver of the world as his grand instruments to advance *Idolatry* in it. For which we are to consider, that although there were gross *Ignorance*, and consequently *Superstition* enough in *Greece* before the *Poetick age* of it, yet their *Superstitious* and *Idolatrous worship* was not so licked and brought into form, as about the time of *Orpheus*, from whom the *Poetick age* commenceth: who was as great an instrument of setting up *Idolatry*, as *Apollonius* was afterwards of restoring it, being both persons of the highest esteem and veneration among the heathen.



heathen. Much about the same time did those live in the world who were the first great promoters of *Superstition* and *Poetry*, as *Melampus*, *Musæus*, *Arion Methymnæus*, *Amphion of Thebes*, and *Eumolpus Thrax*, none of whom were very far distant from the time of *Orpheus*. Of whom *Clemens Alexandrinus* thus speaks, *προσχημασι μουσικῆς λυμνηάμβροι τ̃ βίον ἐν τέχνῳ πνὶ* *Protreptic. p. 3.*  
*ροητεία*—*τὲς ἀνθρώπους ἐπὶ τὰ εἶδωλα χειραγωγῶσι πρώτοι.* These under a pretence of *Musick* and *Poetry* corrupting the lives of men, did by a kind of artificial *Magick* draw them on to the practice of *Idolatry*. For the novelty and pleasingness of *Musick* and *Poetry* did presently insinuate its self into the minds of men, and thereby drew them to a venerable esteem both of the persons and practices of those who were the Authours of them. So *Conon* in *Photius* tells us that *Orpheus* was exceedingly acceptable to the people for his skill in *Musick*, which the *Thracians* and *Macædonians* were much delighted with : *Phot. Biblioth. Cod. 186. sect. 45.*  
 From which arose the *Fable* of his drawing trees and wild beasts after him, because his *Musick* had so great an influence upon the civilizing that people, who were almost grown rude through *Ignorance* and *Barbarism* : and so *Horace* explains it,

*Sylvestres homines sacer, interpretæ Deorum,*  
*Cædibus & victu fædo deterruit Orpheus,*  
*Dictus ob hoc lenire Tigres rapidosque Leones.*

*Ep. ad Pisson.*

This *Orpheus* by *Mythologists* is usually called the son of *Calliope*, but may with better reason be called the father of the whole *Chorus* of the *Muses*, than the son of one of them, since *Pindar* calls him *πατὴρ ἀοιδῶν*, and *John Tzetzes* tells us he was called the son of *Calliope*, *ὃς καλλιτοίας ποιητικῆς εὐρετῆς καὶ* *Schol. in Hæst. Od. p. 8.*  
*ὑμνων ἧς εἰς τὸς θεὸς*, as the inventor of *Poetical elegancy*, and the sacred *Hymns* which were made to the Gods. (Which the old Romans called *Assamenta*; and *Justin Martyr* calls him *τὸ πολυθεῖστη* *πρῶτον διδάσκαλον*, the first teacher of *Polytheism* and *Idolatry*. *Parænes. 1.*

For this *Orpheus* having been in *Ægypt*, as *Pausanias*, *Diodorus*, and *Artapanus* in *Eusebius* all confess, he brought from thence most of the *Magical* rites and *superstitious customs* in use there, and set them up among the *Grecians*; so *Diodo-* *Sect. 3.*  
*Paus. Eliac. 2.*  
*Diod. bibl. lib. 1.*  
*Euseb. Præp. l. 10.*

*Diodorus* acknowledgeth in the same place; and is likewise evident by what *Aristophanes* saith in his *Βάτραχοι*,

*Aff.* 4. sc. 2.

Ὅρφεύς μὲν γὰρ τελετὰς θ' ἡμῶν κατέδειξε  
Φόνων τ' ἀπιχεῖσθαι.

*Lacon.* p. 95.

*Corinth.* p. 72.

*V.C. Rhod. Ant.*

*Leff.* l. 15. p. 9.

*Geogr.* l. 10.

*Enterp.* p. 134.

*Ed. H. St.*

*V. Suidam in*

*Orph.*

*Orpheus* first instructed them in the sacred mysteries, and to abstain from slaughter: which is to be understood of the *βεβουσία*, the killing of beasts in sacrifice, which probably was in use among them before, as a remainder of ancient tradition, till *Orpheus* brought his *Aegyptian* doctrine into request among them. The mysteries of *Osiris*, saith *Diodorus*, were transplanted into Greece under the name of *Dionysius* or *Bacchus*, and *Isis* under *Ceres* or *Magna Mater*, and the punishment and pleasures after this life from the rites of sepulture among them; *Charon's* wafting of souls from the lake *Acherusia* in *Agypt*, over which they were wont to send the dead bodies. *Pausanias* tells us, that the *Spartans* derived the worship of *Ceres* *Cthonia* from *Orpheus*, and the *Aeginatæ* the worship of *Hecate*. Besides which he instituted new rites and mysteries of his own, in which the initiated were called *Ὅρφεωτελεται*, and required a most solemn oath from all of them never to divulge them, which was after observed in all those profane mysteries which in imitation of these were set up among the *Greeks*. *Strabo* thinks the mysteries of *Orpheus* were in imitation of the old *Cotyttian* and *Bendidian* mysteries among the *Thracians*; but *Herodotus* with more probability parallels them and the *Dionysian* with the *Aegyptian*, from which we have already seen that *Orpheus* derived his; who is conceived by *Georgius Cedrenus* and *Timotheus* in *Eusebius*, to have lived about the time of *Gideon* the Judge of *Israel*; but there is too great confusion concerning his age, to define any thing certainly about it. Which ariseth most from the several persons going under his name, of which, besides this, were in all probability two more; the one an *Heroick Poet*, called by *Suidas*, *Ciconæus*, or *Arcas*, who lived two Ages before *Homer*, and he that goes under the name of *Orpheus*, whose *Hymns* are still extant, but are truly ascribed to *Onomacritus* the *Athenian*, by *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Tatianus Assyrius*, *Suidas*, and others, who flourished in the times of the *Pisistratidæ* at *Athens*. We are like  
then



then to have little relief for finding out of *truth* in the *Poetick* Age of *Greece*, when the main design of the *Learning* then used was only to *insinuate* the belief of *fables* into the *People*, and by that to awe them into *Idolatry*.

Sect. 4.

If we come lower down to the succeeding *Poets*, we may find *fables* increasing still in the times of *Homer*, *Hesiod*, and the rest, which made *Eratoſthenes*, a Person of great *Judgement* and *Learning* ( whence he was called *alter Plato*, and  $\pi\epsilon\lambda\alpha\delta\alpha\theta\iota$ , and  $\tau\omicron\ \beta\iota\tau\alpha$ , because he carried, if not the *first*, yet the *second* place in all kind of *Literature* ) condemn the *ancient Poetry* as  $\gamma\epsilon\gamma\acute{o}\tau\eta\ \mu\upsilon\theta\omicron\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\alpha\nu$ , a *company of old Wives tales*, which were invented for nothing but to please silly people, and had no real *learning* or *truth* at all in them. For this, though he be sharply censured by *Strabo*, in his *first* Book, who undertakes to *vindicate* the *Geography* of *Homer* from the *exceptions* of *Eratoſthenes*; yet himself cannot but confess that there is a very great *mixture* of *fables* in all their *Poets*, which is, saith he, partly to delight the people, and partly to awe them. For the minds of men being always desirous of novelties, such things do hugely please the natural humours of weak people; especially if there be something in them that is  $\sigma\alpha\upsilon\mu\epsilon\gamma\acute{o}\nu\ \kappa\iota\ \tau\epsilon\alpha\tau\acute{o}\delta\eta\varsigma$ , very strange and wonderfull, it increaseth the delight in hearing it;  $\eta\ \pi\epsilon\varsigma\ \beta\acute{\alpha}\tau\ \tau\omicron\ \mu\alpha\upsilon\delta\acute{\alpha}\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\alpha\ \phi\iota\lambda\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\nu$ , which draws them on to a desire of hearing more of it. And by this means, saith he, are children first brought on to learning, and all ignorant persons are kept in awe; nay, and the more learned themselves ( partly for want of reason and judgment, and partly from the remainder of those impressions which these things made upon them when they were children ) cannot shake off that former credulity which they had as to these things. By which discourse of *Strabo*, though intended wholly by him in *vindication* of *poetick fables*, it is plain and evident what great *disservice* hath been done to *truth* by them, by reason they had no other *Records* to preserve their *ancient History* but these *fabulous Writers*, and therefore supposing a *mixture* of *truth*, and *falsehood* together, which *Strabo* contends for; yet what way should be taken to distinguish the *true* from the *false*, when they had no other certain *Records*? and besides, he himself acknowledgeth how hard a *matter* it is even for wise men to excuse those *fabulous narrations* out of their

their minds, which were *insinuated* into them by all the advantages which *prejudice, custom, and education* could work upon them. Granting then there may be some *truth* at the bottom of their *fabulous narrations* ;

Odysf. 3.

Ὡς δ' ὅτε τις χρυσὸν ἀειχέμεναι ἀγνοῶν ἀνῆλθε.

Which may be gilded over with some pleasant tales, as himself compares it ; yet how shall those come to know that it is only gilded, that never saw any pure metal, and did always believe that it was what it seemed to be ? Had there been any *αἰσίνειον*, or touchstone to have differenced between the one and the other, there might have been some way for a *separation* of them ; but there being none such, we must conclude, that the *fabulous narrations* of Poets instead of making *truth* more pleasant by their *fictions*, have so adulterated it, that we cannot find any *credibility* at all in their narrations of elder times, where the *truth* of the *story* hath had no other way of conveyance but through their *fictions*.

Scct. 5.

But though Poets may be allowed their liberty for representing things to the greatest advantage to the *palates* of their Readers, yet we may justly expect, when men profess to be *historical*, they should deliver us nothing but what upon strictest examination may prove undoubted truth. Yet even this were the *Greeks* far from ; for *Strabo* himself confesseth of their eldest *Historians*, Καὶ οἱ παλαιὸι ὃ ἱστοικοὶ καὶ φυσικοὶ μυθολογοῖσι, their first *Historians* both of persons and things were *fabulous*. *Diodorus* particularly instanceth in their eldest *Historians*, as *Cadmus Milesius*, *Hecatæus*, and *Hellanicus*, and condemns them for *fabulousness*. *Strabo* condemns *Damastes Sigeensis* for vanity and falshood, and wonders at *Eratosthenes* for making use of him ; yet this man is of great antiquity among them, and his testimony used by Authours of good credit, as *Dionysius Halicarnassensis*, *Plutarch*, and others. Nay, *Pliny* professeth to follow him, and so doth *Aristæas Proconnesius*, in his *Arimaspsia*, which may render the credit of his History very suspicious ; with whom it was a sufficient ground of credibility to any story, That he found it in some Greek Authours. *Strabo* reckons *Damastes* with *Euemerus Messenius* and *Antiphanes Bergius* ; which latter was so noted a *Liar*, that from

Geogr. l. x.

V. Casaub. in

Strab. l. 1.

Voss. de hist.

Græc. l. 4. c. 5.



from him, as *Stephanus* tells us, *βερυαλίζειν* was used as a Proverb *μετ' πολὺ βέρειν* for, to speak never a word of truth. *Aristeus Proconnesius* lived in the time of *Cyrus*, and writ a History of the *Arimaspi*, in three Books, who seems to have been the *Sir John Mandeuil* of Greece, from his stories of the *Arimaspi*, with one eye in their foreheads, and their continual fighting with the *Gryphens* for gold; yet the story was taken upon trust by *Herodotus*, *Pliny*, and many others, though the experience of all who have visited those *Northern Climats*, do sufficiently refute these follies. *Strabo* saith of this *Aristeus*, that he was, *ἀνὴρ γόνις εἰς πρῶτον*, one inferior to none for juggling, *Geogr. l. 13.* which censure was probably occasioned by the common story of him, that he could let his soul out of his body when he pleased, and bring it again; yet this Juggler did *Celsus* pitch on to confront with our blessed Saviour, as *Hierocles* did on *Apolonius*; so much have those been to seek for reason, who have sought to oppose the doctrine of faith.

But further, what credit can we give to those *Historians* *Seet. 6.* who have striven to confute each other, and lay open one anothers falshood to the World. Where was there ever any such dissonancy in the sacred History of *Scripture*? doth the Writer of one Book discover the weakness of another? do not all the parts so exactly agree, that the most probable suspicion could ever fall into the heart of an *Infidel*, is, that they were all written by the same person, which yet the series of times manifests to have been impossible? But now, if we look into the ancient *Greek* *Historians*, we need no other testimony than themselves to take away their credibility. The *Genealogies* of *Hesiod* are corrected by *Acusilaus*, *Acusilaus* is condemned by *Hellanicus*, *Hellanicus* accused of falshood by *Ephorus*, *Ephorus* by *Timæus*, *Timæus* by such who followed him, as *Josephus* fully shews. *Appion. l. 1.* Where must we then fix our belief? upon all in common? that is the ready way to believe contradictions: for they condemn one another of falshood. Must we believe one, and reject the rest? but what evidence doth that one give why he should be credited more than the rest? And which is a most irrefragable argument against the *Grecian history*, their eldest *Historians* are acknowledged to be the most fabulous; for our only recourse for deciding the controversies among the younger *Historians*, must be to the elder; And

here we are further to seek than ever; for the first ages are *confessed* to be *poetical*, and to have no certainty of *truth* in them. So that it is impossible to find out any undoubted certainty of ancient times among the *Greek Historians*; which will be yet more evident when we add this, That there are very few extant of those *Historians*, who did carry the greatest name for Antiquity.

Sett. 7.

The highest Antiquity of the *Greek Historians* doth not much exceed the time of *Cyrus* and *Cambyſes*, as *Vossius* hath fully demonstrated in his *learned Book, De Historicis Græcis*, and therefore I shall spare particular enquiries into their several ages. Only these two things will further clear the *insufficiency* of the *Greek history*, as to an account of ancient times: first, That of many of these old *Historians* we have nothing left but their mere names, without any certainty of what they treated. Such are *Sisyphus* Cous, *Corinnus*, *Eugeon* Samius, *Deiochus* Proconnesius, *Eudemus* Parus, *Democles* Phigaleus, *Amelesagoras* Chalconius, *Xenomedes* Chius, and several others whose names are recorded by several Writers, and listed by *Vossius* among the *Historians*, but no evidence what subject of history was handled by them. Secondly, That of those whose not only memories are preserved, but some evidence of what they writ, we have nothing extant till the time of the *Persian war*. For all that was writ before, is now consumed by time, and swallowed up in that vast and all-devouring Gulf; in which yet their heads still appear above the waters, to tell us what once they informed the World of. It cannot be denied, but if many of those ancient Histories were yet remaining, we might probably have some greater light into some matters of fact in the elder times of *Greece*, which now we are wholly to seek for, unless we think to quench our thirst in the muddy waters of some fabulous Poets. For what is now become of the antiquities of *Ionia* and the city *Miletus* written by *Cadmus* Milesius, supposed to be the first Writer of History? where lie the *Genealogies* of *Acusilaus* Argivus? where is now extant the History of the Gods written by *Pherecydes* Scyrius, *Pythagoras* his Master? or the *Chronica* of *Archilochus* who flourished about the 20th. Olympiad? or those of *Theagenes* Rheginus? Where may we hope to meet with *Pherecydes* Leriis his Attick antiquities, or his Catalogue of Cities and Nations? or *Hecataeus* his description



*description of Asia, and some suppose of Libya and Europe too? or the Originals of Nations and Founders of Cities written by Hellanicus? How may we come by the Persick, Greek and Egyptian History of Charon Lampfacenus; the Lydian History of Xanthus Lydius; the Samian Antiquities of Simmias Rhodius; the Corinthian History of Eumelus Corinthius; Panyasis his Antiquities of Greece; the Scythian History of Anacharsis; the Phrygian of Diagoras; the Chaldaick and Persian of Democritus; the Sicilian and Italian of Hippys Rheginus; the Telchiniack History of Teleclides? All these are now buried with many more in the rubbish of time, and we have nothing but the meer skeletons of them left, to tell us that once such persons were, and thought themselves concerned to give the world some account of their being in it. Whereby may be likewise seen the remarkable providence of God, concerning the sacred History, which though of far greater antiquity than any of these, hath survived them all, and is still preserved with as much purity and incorruption as a Book passing through so many hands was capable of. But of that in its due place.*

But yet if the *Greek Historians* that are yet extant, were of more undoubted credit than those that are lost, we might easily bear with our losing some old stories, if we gained some authentick history by it accomplished in all its parts: but even this we are far from in the *Greek History*; for the *Historians* themselves do either confess their own ignorance of ancient times, or do most palpably discover it, which was the third and last consideration touching the credibility of the *Grecian History*. That most grave and accurate Historian *Thucydides*, than whom scarce ever any *Grecian* discovered more an impartial love to the truth in what he writ, doth not only confess, but largely prove the impossibility of an exact account to be given of the times preceding the *Peloponnesian War*, in the very entrance into his History: For, saith he, the matter preceding that time, cannot now through the length of time be accurately discovered or found out by us. All that he could find in the ancient state of Greece was a great deal of Confusion, unquiet stations, frequent removals, continual piracies, and no settled form of Commonwealth. What certain account can be then expected of those times, when a most judicious Writer, even of Athens its self, acknowledg-

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Sect. 8.

eth such a *Chaos* in their *ancient History* ! And *Plutarch*, a later Author indeed, but scarce behind any of them, if we believe *Taurus* in *A. Gellius*, for learning and prudence, dares not, we see, venture any further back than the time of *Theſeus* ; for before that time, as he compares it, as *Geographers* in their *Maps*, when they have gone as far as they can, fill up the empty space with some unpassable mountains, or frozen seas or devouring sands ; so those who give an account of elder times, are fain to insert *παραδιδόντες τετραγώνους*, some wonderful and Tragical stories, which (as he saith) have neither any truth nor certainty in them. Thus we see those who were best able to judge of the *Greek Antiquities*, can find no sure footing to stand on in them ; and what basis can we find for our faith, where they could find so little for their knowledge ? And those who have been more daring and venturous than these persons mentioned, what a *Labyrinth* have they run themselves into ? how many confusions and contradictions have they involved themselves in ? sometimes writing the passages of other Countries for those of *Greece*, and at other times so confounding times, persons and places, that one might think they had only a design upon the understandings of their readers, to make them play at *Blind-mans-buff* in searching for the *Kings of Greece*.

Sett. 9.

But as they are so confused in their own History, so they are as ignorant and fabulous when they dare venture over their own thresholds and look abroad into other Countries ; we certainly owe a great part of the lamentable ignorance of the true original of most Nations to the pitifull account the *Greek* Authours have given of them ; which have had the fortune to be entertained in the world with so much esteem and veneration, that it hath been thought learning enough to be acquainted with the account which they give of Nations. Which I doubt not hath been the great reason so many fabulous relations, not only of nations but persons and several animals never existing in the world, have met with so much entertainment from the less inquisitive world. The *Greek* Writers, it is evident, took up things upon trust as much as any people in the world did, being a very weak and inconsiderable Nation at first, and afterwards the knowledge they had was generally borrowed from other Nations, which  
the



the wise men only suited to the temper of the *Greeks*, and so made it more *fabulous* than it was before. As it was certainly the great defect of the *natural philosophy* of the *Greeks*; (as it hath been ever since in the world) that they were so ready to form *Theories* upon some *principles* or *hypotheses*, which they only received by *Tradition* from others, without fetching their *knowledge* from the *experiments* of *nature*; and to these they suited all the *phænomena* of *nature*; and what was not suitable was rejected as *monstrous* and *anomalous*: so it was in their *History* wherein they had some *fabulous hypotheses* they took for granted without enquiring into the *truth* and *certainty* of them, and to these they suit whatever light they gained in after-times of the *state* of *Foreign Nations*, which hath made *Truth* and *Antiquity* wrestle so much with the *corruptions* which eat into them through the *pride* and *ignorance* of the *Greeks*. Hence they have always suited the *History* of other *Nations* with the account they give of their own; and where nothing could serve out of their own *History* to give an account of the *original* of other *Nations*, they (who were never backward at fictions) have made a *Founder* of them suitable to their own language. The truth is, there is nothing in the world usefull or beneficial to mankind, but they have made shift to find the *Authour* of it among themselves. If we enquire after the *original* of *Agriculture*, we are told of *Ceres* and *Triptolemus*; if of *pasturage*, we are told of an *Arcadian Pan*; if of *wine*, we presently hear of a *Liber Pater*: if of *Iron instruments*, then who but *Vulcan*? if of *Musick*, none like to *Apollo*. If we press them then with the *History* of other *Nations*, they are as well provided here: if we enquire an account of *Europe*, *Asia* or *Libya*; for the *first* we are told a fine story of *Cadmus* his *sister*, for the *second* of *Prometheus* his *mother* of that name, and for the *third* of a *daughter* of *Epaphus*. If we are yet so curious as to know the *original* of particular *Countries*; then *Italia* must find its name from a *Calf* of *Hercules*, because *ἰταλῶ* in *Greek* will signifie some such thing; *Sardinia* and *Africa* must be from *Sardos* and *Afer* two *sons* of *Hercules*; but yet if these will not serve, *Hercules* shall not want for *children* to people the world; for we hear of *Scythes*, *Galatas*, *Lydus*, some other *sons* of his, that gave names to *Scythia*, *Lydia*,  
Galatia;

*Galatia*; with the same probability that *Media* had its name from *Medea*, and *Spain* and *Lusitania* from *Pan* and *Lusus*, two companions of *Bacchus*. If *Persia* want a Founder, they have one *Persæus* an *Argive* ready for it; if *Syria*, *Babylonia* and *Arabia* want reasons of their names, the prodigal *Greeks* will give *Apollo* three sons, *Syrus*, *Babylon* and *Arabs*, rather than they shall be heretical *Acephalists*. This vanity of theirs was universal, not confined to any place or age, but as any Nation or People came into their knowledge, their *Gods* were not so decrepit, but they might father one son more upon them, rather than any Nation should be *filia populi*, and want a father. Only the grave *Athenians* thought scorn to have any father assigned them; their only ambition was to be accounted *Aborigines* & *genuini terra*, to be the eldest sons of their *Teeming mother the earth*, and to have been born by the same equivocal generation that Mice and Frogs are from the impregnated slime of the earth. Are we not like to have a wonderfull account of ancient times from those who could arrogate to themselves so much knowledge from such slender and thin accounts of the Originals of people which they gave, and would have the world to entertain with the greatest veneration upon their naked words? Have we not indeed great reason to hearken to those who did so frequently discover their affection to Fables, and manifest their ignorance when ever they venture upon the History of other Nations?

Sett. 10.

The truth is, *Herodotus* himself (whom *Tully* calls the *Father of History*, which title he deserves at least in regard of antiquity, being the eldest of the extant *Greek Historians*) hath stood in need of his *Compurgators*, who yet have not been able to acquit him of *fabulousness*, but have sought to make good his credit by *recrimination*, or by making it appear that *Herodotus* did not fully believe the stories he tells, but took them upon trust himself, and so delivers them to the world. Some impute it to the *ingenuity* of *Herodotus*, that he calls his books of History by the name of the *Muses*, on purpose to tell his Readers they must not look for meer *History* in him, but a mixture of such relations, which though not true, might yet please and entertain his Readers. Though others think they were not so inscribed by himself,  
but



but the names were given to them by the *Greeks* from the admiration his History had among them. However this were, this we are certain, that *Herodotus* was not first suspected of falshood in these latter ages of the world, but even among the *Greeks* themselves there have been found some that would undertake to make good that charge against him. For so *Suidas* tells us of one *Harpecraton Alius*, who writ a book on purpose to discover the falshood of *Herodotus*, περὶ τοῦ καλῆς αὐτοῦ τῆς Ἡεροδότης ἱστορίας. *Plutarch* his Books are well known of the spight or malignity of *Herodotus*, but the occasion of that is sufficiently known likewise, because *Herodotus* had given no very favourable character of *Plutarch's* Countrey. *Strabo* Geogr. l. 17. likewise seems to accuse *Herodotus* much of *nugacity* and *mixing prodigious fables with his History*; but, I confess, observing the grounds on which *Plutarch* insists against *Herodotus*, I am very prone to think that the ground of the great pique in some of the *Greek Writers* against *Herodotus*, was, that he told too many tales out of *School*, and had discovered too much of the *Infancy of Greece*, and how much the *Grecians* borrowed of the *Aegyptian superstitions*: which *Plutarch* expressly speaks of, that *Herodotus* was too much led aside, καὶ Αἰγυπτίων ἀλαζονείαις καὶ μυθολογίαις τὰ σημαντά τε καὶ ἀγνότατα καὶ Ἑλληνικῶν ἰε- De Herod. Mal. p. 857. ρῶν ἀνατρέπων. Although therefore *Herodotus* may not be much to blame in the things which the *Grecians* most charge him with, yet those who favour him most cannot excuse his palpable mistakes in some things, and ignorance in others. C. Appion. l. 1. *Josephus* thinks he was deceived by the *Aegyptian Priests* in Canon. Isagog. l. 3. things relating to the state of their affairs, of which *Jos. Scaliger* gives many accounts; either, saith he, the persons who gave him his intelligence were ignorant themselves; or else, like true *Agyptians*, they were cunning enough, but imposed upon *Herodotus* being a stranger and unacquainted with their artifices; or else he did not understand his Interpreter, or was deceived by him; or lastly, *Herodotus* might have so much of a *Grecian* in him, as to adulterate the true History with some fables of his own; wherefore he rather adheres to *Manetho* than *Herodotus* as to the *Aegyptian History*: who yet elsewhere ( I will not say with what constancy to himself ) vouchsafes him this high elogium, that he is, *Scrinium originum Græcarum & Barbararum, auctor à doctis nunquam deponendus.* Nol. ad num. Euseb. 1572.

Sest. 11.

Hist. l. 2. c. 4.

Hist. Alexand.  
l. 6.

Geogr. l. 1.

It cannot be denied but a great deal of very usefull History may be fetched out of him ; yet who can excuse his *Ignorance*, when he not only denies there is an *Ocean* compassing the Land, but condemns the *Geographers* for asserting it? Unless this might be any plea for his *ignorance* in *Geography*, that he had so many great names after him guilty of the same: Witness *Aristotle's* suspicion that the *Indies* should be joyned to *Europe* about the *Straights*, where they feigned *Hercules* his pillars to be. And the *Thereans* ignorance where any such place as *Libya* was, when the *Oracle* bid them plant a *Colony* there. Would it not have been worth ones while to have heard the great noise the *Sun* used to make every night when he doused his head in the *Ocean*, as none of the most ignorant *Greeks* imagined? And to have seen the *Sun* about *Hercules* his pillars to be a hundred times bigger than he appeared to them, as they commonly fancied. Was not *Alexander*, think we, well tutoured in his *Cosmography* by his Master *Aristotle*, when he writ word to his Mother, he had found out the head of *Nilus* in the *East Indies*? as *Arrian* relates the story. No wonder then his souldiers should mistake the mountain *Paropamisus* in the *Indies*, for *Caucasus* near *Colchis*, when even their learned men thought *Colchis* the utmost boundary of the World on that side, as *Hercules* his pillars on this. What a lamentable account then were they able to give of the most ancient times, who were so ignorant of the state of the world in their own time, when *Learning* was in its height in *Greece*, and frequent discoveries daily made of the world, by the wars which were made abroad! *Eratosthenes* confesseth the *Grecians* were ignorant of a great part of *Asia*, and the *Northern parts* of *Europe* before *Alexander's* expedition; and *Strabo* confesseth as much of the *Western parts* of *Europe* till the *Roman expeditions* thither. *Palus Mæotis* and *Colchis*, saith he, were not fully known till the time of *Mithridates*, nor *Hyrkania*, *Bactriana*, and *Scythia*, till the *Parthian wars*. *Eratosthenes* mentions some who thought the *Arabian Sea* to be only a *Lake*; and it further argues their ignorance in *Geography*, that the later *Geographers* always correct the errors of the elder, as *Ptolomy* doth *Marinus*, *Eratosthenes* those before him, *Hipparcus* *Eratosthenes*, and *Strabo* not only both them, but *Eudoxus*, *Ephorus*, *Dicæarchus*, *Polybius*, *Posidonius*, and almost all



all that had writ before him. I insist on these things, not that I would destroy the *credibility* of any *humane history*, where the Authours are guilty of any mistakes (for that were to take away the credit of all humane History) but to shew how *insufficient* those Histories are to give us a certain account of the *original* of *Nations*, who were so unacquainted with the *state* of those *Nations* which they pretended to give an account of. For where there is wanting *divine revelation* (which was not pretended by any *Greek Historians*; and if it had, had been easily refuted) there must be supposed a full and exact knowledge of all things pertaining to that which they pretend to give an account of; and if they discover *apparent defect* and *insufficiency* (which hath been largely manifested as to them, in the precedent discourse) we have ground to deny the *credibility* of those *Histories* upon the account of such defect and insufficiency. So much then will abundantly suffice for the making good the first argument against the *credibility* of *profane histories*, as to the account which they give of ancient times, different from the *Word of God*.

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## C H A P. V.

## The general uncertainty of Heathen Chronology.

*The want of credibility in Heathen History further proved from the uncertainty and confusion in their accounts of ancient times; that discovered by the uncertain form of their years. An enquiry into the different forms of the Egyptian years; the first of thirty Days, the second of four Months; of both instances given in the Egyptian history. Of the Chaldean accounts, and the first Dynasties mentioned by Berosus, how they may be reduced to probability. Of the Egyptian Dynasties. Of Manetho. Reasons of accounting them fabulous, because not attested by any credible authority, and rejected by the best Historians. The opinion of Scaliger and Vossius, concerning their being cotemporary, propounded and rejected with reasons against it. Of the ancient division of Egypt into Nomi or Provinces, and the number of them against Vossius and Kircher.*

## Sect. I.

**T**HE next thing to manifest how little there is of credibility in the account of ancient times, reported by the histories of heathen Nations, is, the uncertainty, confusion and ambiguity in the account which they give of those times. If we suppose them not at all defective as to their records, if yet we find the account given so perplexed, ambiguous and confused, that we can find no certainty at all of the meaning of it, we have very little reason to entertain it with any certain assent unto it. Now this will be made evident by these things. 1. *The uncertainty of their Chronology, whereon their whole account depends.* 2. *The multitude of Impostures taken for ancient Histories.* 3. *The uncertain meaning of those Characters wherein their ancient Histories were preserved.* I begin with the great uncertainty of the heathen Chronology, which will be manifested by two things; first, *the uncertain form of their years*: secondly, *the want or uncertainty of their  $\text{ἰσχυρά}$ , or certain fixed Epochs from which to derive their account of ancient times.* First, *the uncertain form of their years*; this of it self is sufficient to destroy the credibility of their accounts of antiquity, if it be manifested that they had different forms of years in use among them; and it be uncertain to which to refer their accounts they



they give ; for if *years* be sometimes *Lunar*, sometimes *Solar*, and sometimes but of *thirty days*, sometimes of *four Months*, sometimes of *three hundred and sixty days*, sometimes *three hundred sixty five*, sometimes *four times three hundred sixty five* in their *tetraeteris*, sometimes *eight times* in their *octaeteris*, sometimes more, what certainty can we possibly have which of them to fix their accounts to? Especially when they only give them in general, and never tell us which of them they mean, which may make it shrewdly suspicious that their intent is only to impose on our understandings, and not to deal fairly and truly with us. We shall therefore so much explain the different *form* of their years, as thereby to shew what uncertainties we are left to by them: Where we meddle not with their *Tropical* and *Astronomical* years, but chiefly those which were in *civil use* among the several Nations we speak to. A year is nothing else but a *System of days*, and is therefore capable of as great *varity*, as *days* are in being joyned together ; but usually there were some other lesser *Systems* of *days* than those which are called *years*, out of which the other doth result. Such is the *εβδομήμερον*, or the *week*, which, as *Joseph Scaliger* saith, was *res omnibus Orientis populis ab ultima usque antiquitate usitata*; a thing in continual use among the *Eastern Nations*, though it be but of late reception into the parts of *Europe*, and no elder than *Christianity* among them. Among the *Romans* was used an *ἐκταήμερον*, which was for the sake of the *Nundinæ*; returning every *ninth day*. The *Mexicans* as *Scaliger* tells us, reckon all by a *τρεισκαιδεκάμερον*, a *System of thirteen days*. Next to these were their *Months*, which were either *Lunar* or *Solar*. The *Lunar* were either from the *Moon's return* to the same point of the *Zodiack* again, called *περίοδος σελήνης*, which was less than *twenty eight days*; but this was of no use in *civil computations*; or else from one conjunction of the *Moon* with the *Sun* to another, which was called *σύνodus σελήνης*; or else from the first *phasys* of the *Moon*, the second day after its *coitus*, called *φάσις* and *ἀπώγεσις σελήνης*; some, as the *Grecians*, reckoned their *Lunar months* from the *coitus*, as *Scaliger* proves out of *Vitruvius*; others from the *phasys*, as some *Eastern Nations* did; as the *Jews* began their observation of the *New Moons* from the first *phasys* or appearance of her after the *coitus*. The *Solar months* were either *natural*,  
such

*De Emendat.  
Temp. l. 1.*

such as were defined by the Sun's passage from one sign of the Zodiack to another ; or civil, whereby the months were equally divided into 30 days apiece, as in the Grecian and Egyptian year.

Seft. 2.

Having thus far seen of what the year consists, we now proceed to shew that the ancient Nations did not observe one constant certain form of year among them, but had several in use, to which their accounts may be referred. And because the Egyptians are supposed to have been best skilled as to the form of the year, according to that of Macrobius, *Anni certus modus apud solos semper Egyptios fuit* : We shall particularly demonstrate the variety of years in use among them : By which we shall see what great uncertainty there is in their accounts of their Dynasties. For first it is evident that the time of 30 days was among the ancient Egyptians accounted a year, for which we have the testimony of Plutarch in Numa. Ἀιγυπτίοις ἡ μὲν πρώτη ἔτα τετραμήνη ; The Egyptians at first had a year consisting of one month, and after of four : And this, if we believe Alexander ab Alexandro, was the year most frequently in use among them. So Varro in Lactantius gives an account of the great Age of some men in ancient times, who are supposed to have lived a 1000 years ; *Ait enim apud Egyptios pro annis menses haberi, ut non Solis per 12 signa circuitus faciat annum, sed Luna quæ orbem illum signiferum 30 dierum spacio illustrat*. It is then evident that this year of thirty days was in use among the Egyptians ; the only scruple is whether it was used in their sacred accounts or no ; and that it was, we have a pregnant testimony in Plutarch, in the fore-cited place ; speaking of the Egyptians great pretence to antiquity, he gives this account of it ; πολλὰ δὲ ἀμύχανον ἔτων ὅτι ταῖς γενεαλογίαις καταφέρουσιν, ἃ τε δὴ τὸς μῆνας εἰς ἔτων δεδωμένοι πηρώροι. They reckon an infinite number of years in their accounts, because they reckon their months instead of years.

According to this computation, it will be no difficult matter to reduce the vast accounts of the Egyptian antiquity to some proportion, and to reconcile their exorbitant Dynasties with sobriety and truth, especially as to the account given of them by Diodorus Siculus ; for so Diodorus gives in their accounts, that the Gods and Hero's reigned in Egypt for the space of near 18000 years, and the last of them was Orus the Son of Isis :

From

Saturn. l. 1.  
c. 12.

Gen. Dier. l. 2.  
c. 23.

De Origin. error.  
l. 2. c. 12. §

Biblioth l. 1.



From the reign of men in *Egypt* he reckons about 9500 years to the time (if we admit of *Jacob. Capellus* his correction of *πεντακισίων* for *πενταμυχλίων* in *Diodorus*) with his entrance into *Egypt*, which was in the 180 Olympiad. Now as the aforesaid learned *Authour* observes, *Diodorus* came into *Egypt*, A. M. 3940. V. C. 694. the mortal men then had reigned in *Egypt* 9500 years, which taking it for these Lunar years of 30 days, makes of Julian years 780. the Hero's and Gods 18000 months, that is of Julian years 1478: from these two summs together are gathered 2258 years, which being deducted from the year of the world 3940, falls in the year of the world 1682 about which time *Misraim*, who was the great historical *Osiris* of *Egypt* (so called by a light variation of his former name) might be well supposed to be born; for that was in the year of *Noah* 630; and so *Orus* might be born, who was the Son of *Osiris*, about the year of the world 1778. Between whose time and *Alexander* the great his Conquest of *Egypt*, the *Egyptians*, as the same *Diodorus* tells us, reckon little less than 23000 years: Now according to this computation of 30 days for a year, we may reconcile this to truth too; for from 1778 to 3667 of the world, which falls upon the 417 year of *Nabonassar*, there is an interval of 1889 years, which makes of these Lunar years of 30 days, saith *Capellus*, 22996 and 15 days, which comes very near, if not altogether, up to the *Egyptian* Computation: So when the *Egyptians*, according to *Diodorus*, make no less than 10000 years distance between their *Hercules* and *Hercules Bæotius*, the Son of *Alcmena*, it must be understood of these Lunar years; for granting what the *Egyptians* say, that *Hercules Bæotius* lived but one generation before the Trojan war, and so his time to fall out about 2783, reckoning now backward from thence, and deducting from that year of the world 10000 months of 30 days, or Julian years 831, and 130 days, the time of the *Egyptian Hercules* will fall about the first year of the world, 1962. about which time we may well suppose him to live or die. And according to this computation we are to understand what the *Egyptians* told *Herodotus*, that from their first King or Priest of *Vulcan*, till the time of *Sethoes* (in whose time *Sennacherib* attempted the Conquest of *Egypt*) that there had been passed 341. Generations, and as many Kings and High-Priests, and 11340 years, reckoning

*Hist. sacr. &  
Exot. A. M.  
1682.*

reckoning three *Generations* to make up a *Century*. But now, if we understand this prodigious computation according to this form of years, we may suspect the *Agyptians* of an intention to deceive *Herodotus* and the credulous *Greeks*, but yet not impeach them of direct falshood, it being thus reconcilable to truth. For according to this account 100 years makes 3000 days, and a *Generation* 1000; so many days the *Kings* or *Priests* of *Vulcan* may be allowed to reign; so 340 *Generations* of 1000 days apiece, make up 340000 days, to which, if we add the 200 days which *Sethos* had now reigned upon *Sennacherib's* invasion, we have 340200 days, which makes up of these years of 30 days apiece 11340, which is the number assigned by *Herodotus*: *Jacobus Capellus* thinks the *Epocha* from whence these years are to reckoned, is from *A. M.* 2350, when *Mephres* began to reign in *Agypt*, from whence if we number these 340200 days, or 11340 monthly years, which makes up of *Julian years* 931, and 152 days, the number falls *A. M.* 3282; about which time in probability *Sennacherib* invaded *Agypt*. Thus we see by making use of those *Lunar years*, that it is possible to reconcile some of the *Agyptian* extravagant accounts to some probability and consistency with truth; but however we owe very little thanks to the *Agyptians* for it, who deliver these things in gross, without telling us which years they mean, and thereby evidence their intent to deceive all who have so little wit as to be deceived by them.

Sett. 3.

The next kind and form of the *Agyptian year*, was that which consisted of four equal months, amounting to 120 days; the use of this kind of year among them is attested by *Plutarch* in the fore-cited place, and by *Diodorus*, who gives an account of this kind of year among the *Agyptians*. *Solinus* seems to mention this as the only year in request among the *Agyptians*: and so *S. Austin*. *Perhibentur Aegyptii quondam tam breves annos habuisse ut quaternis mensibus finirentur*. This renders then the *Agyptians* accounts yet more uncertain, and only leaves us to guess with the greatest probability of reason, what form of year was meant by them in their *Computations*. So when *Diodorus* speaks so much in favour of the old *Agyptian Kings* and *Laws*, and produceth this from the *Agyptian Priests*, as the best evidence of the excellent temper of their Govern-

L. 1.

*Polyhist. c. 3.*

*De Civit. Dei,*  
*l. 12. c. 10.*

*L. 1. Biblioth.*



Government, that they had *Kings* of their own Nation for the space of 4700 years, till the time of *Cambyſes* his inroad into *Aegypt*, which was in the third year of the 63 *Olympiad*. Now beſides the apparent *contradiction* of theſe accounts to the *other* already explained, if we take them in groſs, as the *Ægyptians* give them, it is evident this can be no otherwiſe true, than by taking theſe accounts in that form of years now mentioned by us. For theſe 4700 years, taking them for 120 days apiece, make up of *Julian years* 1544, which being deducted from the year of the world 3475, which was the time when *Cambyſes* invaded *Aegypt*, the remainder is *A. M.* 1931, about which time we may fix the death of *Orus*, from whom their proper *Kings* commenced. And of theſe years *Voffius* tells us we are to underſtand what they report of the long lives of their *ancient Kings*, when they attribute to each of them the ſpace of 300 years, as when they attribute a 1000, and more to their *eldeſt Kings*, we are to underſtand them of ſimple *Lunar years* of 30 days, by which theſe *Gigantick* meaſures of the term of their lives, may without the help of *Procrustes* be cut ſhort according to the proportion of mens ordinary age in thoſe eldeſt times. So when *Diodorus* reckons from the death of *Proteus* to his own time *A. M.* 3940, 3400 years, it muſt be underſtood of theſe years of four equal months; for ſo thoſe 2400 years make up of *Julian years* 1117, which being deduced from 3940, the remainder is 2823, about which year of the world *Proteus* may be ſuppoſed to live, which was about the time of the *Judges* in *Israel*.

*De Idolat. l. 1. c. 28.*

Neither was this only the *Ægyptians* way, but in probability the ancient *Chaldeans* obſerved the ſame, which may be a ground likewiſe of thoſe unmeaſurable accounts among them in their firſt *Dynaſties*, as is evident in the Fragments of *Abydenus* and *Apollodorus* out of *Berosus*, where the times of their firſt *Kings* are reckoned not by years, but *Σάεσι*, *Νήεσι*, and *Σώσοσι*; now according to them every *Σάεσι* contained 3600 years, *Νήεσι* 600, *Σώσοσι* 60. Now who can imagine that *Alorus* and the ten *Kings* from him to *Xiſuthrus* ſhould reign 120 *Sari* as their computation is, which reckoning for every *Saros* 3600 years, makes up 432000 years? A very fair ſum for the *Chaldean Dynaſties* before the time of *Xiſuthrus* by whom in probability *Noah* was by them underſtood. There have been

*ſect. 4*

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only

only two ways thought on of dealing with these computations; either rejecting them as wholly *fabulous*, and founded on no evidence or Records of History, as we have seen already; only they might retain (being so near the place of the Settlement of *Noah* and his posterity after the flood) the memory not only of the flood (of which it is evident they had several remainders preserved in their traditions) but likewise of the Ages of men preceding the flood, wherein they were right, reckoning from *Alorus* the first to *Xisuthrus*, i. e. from *Adam* to *Noah*, ten *Generations*; but as to the names of those ten persons, and the times they lived in, being wholly ignorant through the unfaithfulness of tradition, they took their liberty not only of coining names, but of setting what Age to them they pleased themselves. And to this purpose *Scaliger* observes that some of their first *Kings* are reckoned before the flood, which saith he, is denied by *Georgius Syncellus* without any shew of reason. Thus far then we may admit of the *Chaldeans Dynasties* as to some part of the tradition, but rejecting their names and computations as fabulous. The other way of explaining these *Dynasties*, is by the several ways of computation among them; For the learned *Monks*, *Panodorus*, and *Anianus*, understand those vast summs, not of *years*, but *days*, and so make a *Saros* to contain 120 months of 30 days apiece, which saith *Scaliger*, make ten *Chaldee years*, and a *Nirus* 20 equal months, and a *Sosos* two: according to which computation the 100 *Sari* make but 1200 years. But this computation of theirs is rejected by *Georgius Syncellus*, because he supposeth *Eusebius* so well versed in these things, that he would never have set them down for *years*, if the *Chaldeans* had not understood them so, and therefore he would not trouble himself in reducing *Fables* to true *History*, as he expresseth it, whose words are at large produced by *Scaliger* in the fore-cited place; and it will appear more necessary to reject those *Chaldee Computations*, if we take the *summs* of their years in the sence which *Salmasius* gives of them in the Preface to his Book, *De annis Climactericis* (from whom *Dyrerius* the Authour of the *Præadamites* hath borrowed most of his Arguments as to these things.) According to him then, every  $\Sigma\delta\epsilon\Theta$  contained no less than 6000 years, as the *Toman* among the *Persians* contained 10000, but because that

learned

Not in Gr.  
Euseb. p. 406.



learned man hath only given us his *reperi Scriptum*, without any certain Foundation for so large an account of those *summs*, we shall take them in as favourable a Sence as we can. In order to which a very *learned man* of our own hath found a third interpretation of the Σάεϙ, in the *Chaldee accounts*, from a *correction* of *Suidas* by the *M. S.* in the *Vatican Library*, according to which he thus reads the words, Οἱ ὅδε αἰεὶς πέντε ἐνιαυτοὶ βεκαὶ καὶ τὴν Χαλδαίων Ψῆφον, εἶπερ ὁ αἰεὶς ποιεῖ μῆνας Σεληνιακῶν σαβῶν, οἷσι γίνονται ἐν ἐνιαυτοῖ καὶ μῆνες ἕξ, and so the sence, faith he, is clear, Σάεϙ according to the *Chaldee account* comprehends 222 months, which come to eighteen years and six months; therefore 120 αἰεὶς make 2220 years, and therefore (he adds) for βεκαὶ. I read, leaving out the last β, βεκα. Now according to this Sence of 120 Sari to comprehend the *summ* of 2220 years, it will be no difficult matter to reduce the fragment of *Berosus* concerning the ten *Kings* before the flood reigning 120 Sari, to some degree of probability: As to which I shall only suppose these two things. First, that the ancient *Chaldeans* had preserved among them some tradition of the number of the chief persons before the flood; for we find them exactly agreeing with the *Scriptures* as to the number, though differing as to the names of them, which may be seen in the Fragments of *Africanus* preserved in *Eusebius* his *Greek Chronica*. Secondly, that *Berosus* from whom *Apolodorus* and *Alexander Polyhistor* deliver these computations, might, as to the account of the times of those persons, follow the translation of the *Septuagint*. For I have already made it evident that *Berosus* did not publish his *History* till after the *Septuagint* was abroad; now according to the computation of the *Septuagint* of the ages before flood, these 120 Sari of the ten Kings will not much disagree from it. For these make 2220 years of these ten persons, and the *Septuagint* in all make 2242; so that if in stead of βεκαὶ in *Suidas*, we only read it βεκα we have the exact computation of the *Septuagint* in these 120 Sari; but of this let the learned judge.

D. Pearson on the Creed. p. 115. 1. edit.

Pag. 5.

Seet. 5.

We now come to the *Agyptian Dynasties* of *Manetho*, as to which I doubt we must be fain to take the same course that *Eusebius* did with the *Chaldee*, καὶ συμβιβάζειν τὸ ψεύδους τῇ ἀληθείᾳ, not to trouble our selves overmuch in seeking to reconcile Fables to truth. Great pains is taken by some very

learned men to reduce the disorderly *Dynasties* of *Manetho*, to some probable account ; but I must confess upon an impartial Examination of them, that I think they have striven, if not to make an *Aethiopian white*, yet an *Aegyptian to speak truth concerning his own Country*, which are almost of an equal impossibility. *Joseph Scaliger* who first in this latter age of the world produced them into the light out of *Georgius Syncellus*, hath a more favourable opinion of them, than of the *Aegyptian History* of *Herodotus*, *Diodorus* and others, but upon what account I cannot imagine. Is it because four *Dynasties*, according to his own computation, exceed the Creation of the world according to the true account ? for which he is fain to make use of his *Tempus prolepticum* and *Julian period*, which reacheth 764 years beyond the age of the world, and was invented by him from the multiplication of the great *Cycle* into the *indiction*, i. e. of 532 into 15. Or is it because forsooth *Manetho* hath digested all into better order, and reckoned up the several *Dynasties* which lay confused in other Authors ? but this only shews him a more cunning impostor who saw the former accounts given by others would not serve the turn, and therefore pretends to more exactness and diligence, that he might more easily deceive his Readers. But setting aside those things which have been said already concerning *Manetho*, I have these things which make me reject his *Dynasties* as *fabulous* : First, the vast difference between *Manetho* his accounts and all others who have written the *Aegyptian History* in the order, and names of his *Dynasties*. Where do we ever read of the several *Dynasties* of the *Thinites*, *Memphites*, *Soites*, *Diospolitans* and many others, but in himself ? It is very strange that neither *Herodotus*, nor *Eratosthenes*, nor *Diodorus*, who have all written a succession of the *Aegyptian Kings*, should neither by their own industry, nor by all the interest they had in *Aegypt*, get any knowledge of these methodically digested *Dynasties*. Besides, had their been any historical certainty in these *Dynasties* of *Manetho*, whence comes it to pass that they should be so silently passed over by those who were *Aegyptian Priests* themselves, and undertook to write the History of *Aegypt* ?

Such



Such were *Charemon* who was an *ἱερογγραφεὺς*; a sacred Scribe, and *Ptolomæus Mendesium* who was an *Ægyptian Priest*, as *Eusebius* tells us, and comprehended the History of *Ægypt* in three books. Now had this *History* been so *authentic* as is pretended, whence come so many and great *contradictions* between them, insomuch that *Josephus* saith, *If that which they report were true, it were impossible they should so much differ; but they labour in the invention of lyes, and write neither agreeably to the truth nor to one another.* So that it is next to a miracle almost to see how prodigiously fond of these *Dynasties* *Kircher* is, and what pains he hath taken to no purpose about them; scio multos esse, saith he, qui hujusmodi *Dynastias* *meras nugas & commenta putant*; very true; but why is not he of the same mind too? he confesseth himself to have been so once; but since he hath conversed more with the *Oriental traditions*, he hath found them not to be so fabulous as many make them. It seems then the *Basis* of the *Ægyptian Dynasties* as well before the *flood* as after, must lie in this *Oriental tradition*; a thing, which some, to shew their great skill in those Eastern Languages, are grown very fond of. But as far as I can yet see, they sail to *Ophir*, nor for *Gold*, but *Peacocks*; and the next *Legend* the world hath should be called *Legenda Orientalis*. For can any thing be more irrational, absurd and fabulous, than those *Arabick traditions* which that Authour scrapes as much for, as *Æsop's Cock* did on the *dunghil*? but there is no *jewel* to be found among them; Unless we should take those fifteen hard names of men for such which by the *Arabick writers* are said to have succeeded each other in *Ægypt* before the *flood*, viz. *Nacraus, Nathras, Mesram, Henoah, Arjak, Hasilim, Husal, Tatrafan, Sarkak, Schaluk, Surith*, (who they say built the *Pyramids*) *Hugith, Manaus, Aphrus, Malinus, Abn Ama Pharaun*, in whose time they say the *flood* came. But should we be so little befriended by reason as to grant all this, what advantage will this be to *Manetho*, who speaks not of *Kings*, but whole *Dynasties*? so that it still appears these *Dynasties* are fabulous, not being attested by any credible witnesses. Secondly, All those who profess to follow *Manetho*, differ strangely from one another, as *Josephus, Africanus, Eusebius, George the Syncellus* of the *Patriarch Tarasius*; and *Scaliger*, who hath taken so much pains in digesting of them,

C. App. l. 1.

Oed. Ægy To 1.  
Sym. 1. c. 9.

yet

*De atat. Mundi, cap. 10.*

yet he is condemned by others since; and *Isaac Vossius* gives a particular caution to his Reader, *In his Dynastiis compingendis nequaquam esse sequendum ordinem & calculum Scaligeri.* What should be the reason of this diversity, but that they thought them not so *authentick*, but they might cut off, alter and transpose, as they saw occasion? which is most plain and evident in *Eusebius*, who makes no difficulty of cutting off one whole *Dynasty*, and dividing another into two, only to reconcile the distance between *Thuoris*, the *Ægyptian King*, and *Tentamus*, the *Assyrian Emperour*, and the destruction of *Troy*; and therefore leaves out four *Assyrian Kings*, and a whole *Dynasty* of the *Ægyptians*, to make a *Synchronism* between those three.

*Self. 6.*

But yet there hath been something very fairly offered to the world, to clear the *truth*, if not *Manetho*, in order to his *Dynasties*, viz. that the subtle *Ægyptian*, to inhance the antiquity of his own *Countrey*, did take *implicite* years for *solid*, and place those in a *succession* which were *cotemporary* one with another; This indeed is a very compendious way to advance a great summ of years with a very little charge: Wherein he hath done, saith *Capellus*, as if a *Spaniard* in the *Indies* should glory of the antiquity of the *Dynasties* of *Spain*, and should attribute to the *Earls of Barcinona* 337 years, to the *King of Arragon* 498, to the *King of Portugal* 418, to the *King of Leo* 545, of *Castile* 800 years, and yet all these *Dynasties* rise from the year of our Lord 717, when the *Saracens* first entred *Spain*. There are very few Nations, but will go near to vie antiquity with the *Ægyptians*, if they may thus be allowed to reckon successively all those *petty royalties* which anciently were in most Nations; as might be particularly instanced in most *great Empires*, that they gradually rise from the *subduing* and *incorporating* of those *petty royalties* into which the several Nations were *cantonized* before. And there seems to be very strong ground of suspicion that some such thing was designed by *Manetho*, from the 32d. *Dynasty* which is of the *Diospolitan Thebans*; for this *Dynasty* is said to begin from the tenth year of the 15th. *Dynasty* of the *Phanician Pastours* in the time of *Saites*; now, which is most observable, he that begins this *Dynasty*, is of the very same name with him who begins the very first *Dynasty* of *Manetho*, who is

*Menes,*

*Hist. sacr. & exot. A. M.*  
3308.



*Menes*, and so likewise his son *Athothis* is the same in both: Which hath made many think, because *Menes* is reckoned first, not only in both these, but in *Diodorus*, *Eratoſthenes* and others, that this *Menes* was he who first began the Kingdom of *Ægypt*, after whose time it was divided into several *Dynasties*. Which makes *Scaliger* say, *illa vetustissima regna fuerunt instar latrociniorum, ubi vis non lex aut successio aut suffragia populi reges in solio regni collocabant.* This opinion of the co-existence of these *Dynasties* is much embraced by *Vossius* Gerard. Vos. Idol. l. i. c. 28. Is. Vos. de atar. Mandi, c. 10. both *Father* and *Son*, and by the *Father* made use of to justify *Scaliger* from *calumniators*, who made as though *Scaliger* did in effect overthrow the authority of the Scriptures by mentioning with some applause the *Dynasties* of *Manetho*.

Seç. 7.

But to this opinion, how plausible soever it seems, I offer these exceptions. First, As to that *Menes* who is supposed to be the first Founder of the *Ægyptian Kingdom*, after whose death it is supposed that *Ægypt* was divided into all these *Dynasties*; I demand therefore who this *Menes* was; was he the same with him whom the Scripture calls *Misraim*, who was the first Planter of *Ægypt*? this is not probable, for in all probability his name must be sought among the *Gods*, and not the *mortals* that reigned. If we suppose him to be any other after him, it will be hard giving an account how he came to have the whole power of *Ægypt* in his hands, and so soon after him it should be divided. For *Kingdoms* are oft-times made up of those *petty royalties* before; but it will be very hard finding instances of one person's enjoying the whole power, and so many *Dynasties* to arise after his decease, and to continue co-existent in peace and full power so long as these several *Dynasties* are supposed to doe. Besides, Is it not very strange that no Historian should mention such a former distribution of several Principalities so anciently in *Ægypt*? But that which to me utterly overthrows the co-existence of these *Dynasties* in *Ægypt*, is, by comparing with them what we find in Scripture of greatest antiquity concerning the Kingdom of *Ægypt*; which I cannot but wonder that none of these learned men should take notice of. When the *Ægyptian Kingdom* was first founded, is not here a place to enquire; but it is evident that, in *Abraham's* time, there was a *Pharaoh, King of Ægypt* (whom Archbishop *Usher* thinks to have been *Apophis*) not *Abimelech*

Gen. 12.

*Abimelech* the first King of Ægypt, as *Constantinus Manasses* reports in his *Annals* (by a ridiculous mistake of the King of *Gerar* for the King of Ægypt.) This Pharaoh was then certainly King of all the Land of Ægypt, which still in Scripture is called the Land of *Misraim* from the first Planter of it : and this was of very great antiquity ; and therefore *Funccius* (though improbably) thinks this Pharaoh to have been *Osiris*, and *Rivet* thinks *Misraim* might have been alive till that time ; here then we find no *Dynasties co-existing*, but one Kingdom under one King. If we descend somewhat lower, to the times of *Jacob* and *Joseph*, the evidence is so undoubted of Ægypt's being an entire Kingdom under one King, that he may have just cause to suspect the eyes either of his body or his mind that distrusts it. For what more evident, than that Pharaoh who preferred *Joseph*, was King of all the Land of Ægypt ? Were not the seven years of famine over all the Land of Ægypt ? Gen. 41. 55. Was not *Joseph* set by Pharaoh over all the Land of Ægypt ? Gen. 41. 41, 43, 45. And did not *Joseph* go over all the Land of Ægypt to gather corn ? Gen. 41. 46. Nay, did he not buy all the Land of Ægypt for Pharaoh ? Gen. 47. 20. Can there possibly be given any fuller evidences of an entire Kingdom, than these are, that Ægypt was such then ? Afterwards we read of one King after another in Ægypt for the space of nigh two hundred years, during the children of *Israel's* slavery in Ægypt ; and was not he, think we, King over all Ægypt, in whose time the children of *Israel* went out thence ? And in all the following History of Scripture, is there not mention made of Ægypt still as an entire Kingdom, and of one King over it ? Where then is there any place for these co-temporary Dynasties in Ægypt ? No where that I know of, but in the fancies of some learned men.

Sect. 8.

Indeed there is one place that seems to give some countenance to this opinion ; but it is in far later times than the first Dynasties of *Manetho* are supposed to be in, which is in *Isai.* 19. 2. Where God saith, he would set the Ægyptians against the Ægyptians, and they shall fight every one against his brother, City against City, and Kingdom against Kingdom. Where it seems that there were several Kingdoms then existent among the Ægyptians ; but the *Septuagint* very well renders it *πολεμοὶ ἐν πολεμοῖς*. now *πολεμοὶ* among the Ægyptians, as *Epiphanius* and others tell

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us, notes τὰ ἐκείνης πόλεως διοικήσα ἥτοι περιχωρῶν, the precincts of every great City, such as our Counties are, and therefore Pliny renders νομοὶ by præfecturæ; these were the several Provinces of Ægypt, of which there were thirty six in Ægypt, ten in Thebais, ten in Delta, the other sixteen in the midland parts; so that by Kingdom against Kingdom, no more is meant than one Province being set against another. Isaac Vossius thinks the number of the ancient Nomi was twelve, and that over every one of these was a peculiar King; and that this number may be gathered from the Dynasties of Manetho, setting aside the Dynasties of the Persians, Æthiopians, and Phœnicians: viz. the Thinites, Memphites, Elephantines, Heracleopolitans, Diospolitan Thebans, the lesser Diospolitans, Xoites, Tanites, Bubastites, Saïtes, Mendesiens, and Sebenmytes: and so that Ægypt was anciently a Dodecharchy, as England in the Saxons times was a Heptarchy. But as it already appears, there could be anciently no such Dodecharchy in Ægypt; so it is likewise evident that this distribution of Ægypt into Nomi is a later thing, and by most Writers is attributed to Sesoosis or Sesostris, whom Josephus supposeth to be Sesack King of Ægypt, co-temporary with Rehobam. Indeed if we believe Gelaldinus the Arabick Historian cited by Kircher, the most ancient distribution of Ægypt was into four parts. Misraim held one part to himself, and gave his Son Copt another, Esmun a third, and Atrib a fourth part; which division the same Authour affirms to have continued till the time of Joseph, who made a new distribution of the whole Land: After him Sesostris divided the whole into thirty several Nomi; so Kircher will needs have it, that of the three several parts of Ægypt, each might have for some mystical signification its ten Nomi, of which every one had its distinct and peculiar God it worshipped, and a particular Palace in the Labyrinth, and a peculiar Sanhedrin or Court of Justice belonging to it. But it evidently appears by that vain-glorious Oedipus, that it is a far easier matter to make new mysteries, than to interpret old ones, which as it might be easily discovered in the main foundations whereon that structure stands, so we have some evidence of it in our first entrance into it, in this part of Chorography of Ægypt. For from whence had he this exact division of Ægypt into thirty Nomi, ten of which belonged to the upper Ægypt, or Thebais, ten to Delta,

*Vid. Boch. Geogr.*  
p. 1. l. 4. c. 4.  
*Oedip. Ægypt.*  
To. 1. Syntag. 1.  
c. 4.

Syntag. I. c. 2.  
p. 7.

Geogr. I. 17.

or the lower *Ægypt*, and the *ten* remaining to the *midland* Country? Hath he this from *Ptolomy*, whose Scheme of the several *Nomi* he publisheth? No, *Ptolomy* and *Pliny* by his own confession afterwards add many other to these, as *Omphile*, *Phanturites*, *Tanites*, *Phatnites*, *Nent*, *Heptanomos*, &c. Hath he it from *Strabo*, whose authority he cites for it? No such matter. For *Strabo* saith expressly that *Thebais* had *ten Nomi*, *Delta ten*, and the *Midland sixteen*; only some are of opinion, saith he, that there were as many *Nomi* as *Palaces* in the *Labyrinth*, which were toward *thirty*; but yet the number is uncertain still. We see by this how *ominous* it is for an *Oedipus* to *stumble* at the *threshold*, and how easie a matter it is to *interpret mysteries*, if we may have the *making* of them. We see then no evidence at all for these *co-temporary Dynasties* of *Manetho*; which yet if we should grant, would be a further argument of the *uncertainty* of *heathen Chronology*, when among them *implicite* years are given out to the world for *solid*; so that which way soever *Manetho* his *Dynasties* be taken, they will prove the thing in hand, whether we suppose them at least most part *fabulous*, or should grant he had taken those in succession to each other, which were *co-existent* with one another.



# C H A P. VI.

## The uncertain Epocha's of Heathen Chronology.

*An account given of the defect of Chronology in the eldest times. Of the Solar year among the Egyptians, the original of the Epacts, the antiquity of Intercalation among them. Of the several Canicular years; the difference between Scaliger and Petavius considered. The certain Epocha's of the Egyptian History no elder than Nabonasser. Of the Grecian accounts. The fabulousness of the Heroical age of Greece. Of the ancient Grecian Kingdoms. The beginning of the Olympiads. The uncertain Origins of the Western Nations. Of the Latin Dynasties. The different Palilia of Rome. The uncertain reckoning Ab U. C. Of impostures as to ancient Histories. Of Anniius, Inghiramius, and others. Of the characters used by Heathen Priests. No sacred characters among the Jews. The partiality and inconsistency of Heathen Histories with each other. From all which the want of credibility in them as to an account of ancient times is clearly demonstrated.*

**T**HE next thing to evidence the uncertainty of the heathen Chronology, is, the want of certain *parapegmata*, or some fixed periods of time, according to which the account of times must be made. For if there be no certain Epocha's by which to reckon the succession of ages, the distance of intervals, and all intervening accidents, we must of necessity fluctuate in continual uncertainties, and have no sure foundation to bottom any account of ancient times upon. The great reason of this defect, is, the little care which those who lived in the eldest times had to preserve the memory of any ancient tradition among themselves, or to convey it to posterity in such a way as might be least liable to imposture. Of all kinds of Learning, Chronology was the most rude in eldest times; and yet that is well called by Scaliger, *The life and soul of History*, without which, History is but a confused lump, a mere Mola, an indigested piece of flesh, without life or form. The ancient accounts of the world were merely from year to year, and that with abundance of obscurity, uncertainty and variety: sometimes go-

*Señ. 1.*

ing by the course of the *Moon*, and therein they were as *mutable* as the *Moon* herself, how to conform the *year* regularly to her *motion*; and it was yet greater difficulty to *regulate* it by the *course* of the *Sun*, and to make the accounts of the *Sun* and *Moon* meet. There was so much perplexity and confusion about the ordering of a *single year*, and so long in most *Nations* before they could bring it into any order, that we are not to expect any *fixed periods* by which to find out the succession of ages among them. Among the *Ægyptians* who are supposed most skilfull in the account of the year, it was a long time before they found out any certain course of it. It is agreed by most, that when the *Ægyptian Priests* had found out the form of the year by the *course* of the *Sun* (which is attributed by *Diodorus* to the *Heliopolitan Priests*) yet the year in common use was only of 360 days, which in any great *period of years* must needs cause a *monstrous confusion*, by reason that their *Months* must of necessity by degrees change their place, so that in the great *Canicular year* of 730 *Thoyth*, which was the *beginning* of the *Summer Solstice* in the entrance into that *period*, would be removed into the midst of *Winter*, from whence arose that *Ægyptian Fable* in *Herodotus*, that in the time of their *eldest Kings*, the *Sun* had twice *changed his rising and setting*; which was only caused by the *variation* of their *Months*, and not by any alteration in the course of the *Sun*. Which defect the *Ægyptian Priests* at last observing, saw a necessity of adding five days to the end of the year, which thence were called *ἐπαγόμεναι*, which implies they were not anciently in use among them, being afterwards added to make up the course of the year. Which the *Ægyptians* give an account of, as *Plutarch* tells us under this Fable: *Mercury being once at Dice with the Moon, he got from her the 72d. part of the year, which he after added to the 360 days which were anciently the days of the year, which they called ἐπεροόμεναι, and therein celebrated the Festivals of their Gods, thence the names of the several ἐπαγόμεναι were taken from the Gods; the first was called Ὀσίης, it being celebrated in honour of him; the second, Ἀφθιεύς, by which Scaliger understands Anubis, but Vossius more probably the Senior Orus; the third to Typho; the fourth to Isis; the fifth to Nephtis the wife of Typho and sister to Isis.* This course of the year

Scaliger

L. 1. c. 50.

Euterp. Vide  
Scaliger. de E-  
mend. Temp. l. 3.  
p. 195.

De Iside & O-  
fri.

De Idol. l. 1.  
c. 28.



*Scaliger* thinks that the *Ægyptians* represented by the Serpent called *Nēō*, being described in a round circle biting some part of his tail in his mouth, whereby saith he, they would have it understood, that the form of the year was not perfect without that adjection of five days to the end of the year: For to this day, saith he, the *Coptites* and ancient *Ægyptians* call the end of the year *νεῖσι*. It seems that afterwards they understood likewise the necessity of intercalation of a day every fourth year, for the sake of the redundant quadrant each year above 365 days; which course of four years they called their *Canicular year*, because they observed its defect in that time one whole day from the rising of the *Dog-star*: and besides that they called it *ἡλιακὸν ἔτος* and *ἔτος θεῶν*, & *lustrum Sothiacum*, from *Σῶθις*, the *Dog-star*: but *Censorinus* denies any use of intercalation among the *Ægyptians* in their civil year, although their *Sacred* and *Hieroglyphical* years might admit of it. And upon this ground, I suppose the controversie between those two learned persons, *Scaliger* and *Petavius*, concerning the antiquity of *Intercalation* among the *Ægyptians* may be reconciled. For on the one side it is apparent, that the ordinary or civil year did want intercalation, by this testimony of *Censorinus*; *Eorum annus civilis solos habet dies 365 sine ullo intercalari; itaq; quadriennium apud eos uno circiter die minus est quam naturale quadriennium*; and thence saith he, it comes to pass, that in 1461 years, which was the great *Heliacal year*, it returns to the same beginning; for then the *Dog-star* ariseth again upon the first day of the month *Thoyth*, as it did at the beginning of this great *Canicular year*; and that this kind of civil year did continue among them in the time of *Censorinus* (which was of the *Dionysian* account 238) appears by this, that he saith in the year wherein he wrote his Book, the *New-moon* of *Thoyth* was before the seventh day of the *Calends* of *July*, whereas 100 years before, it was before the 12 of the *Calends* of *August*; whence it is evident, that the *Julian year*, whatever some learned men pretend to the contrary, was not in ordinary use among the *Ægyptians* in that time; and that *Sofigenes* when he corrected the *Roman account*, and brought in the form of the *Julian year*, did not take his pattern from the *Ægyptian year*, but from the *Grecians* of *Alexandria*, who did

*De die Natali*  
c. 18.

*V. Petav. de doctr. temp.* l. 3. c. 2.

*Kircher Oedip. Egypt. Tom. 3. Class. 7. cap. 2.*

did make use of the *quadrant* added to the 365 years, which the *Ægyptians* did not, as appears further by the *golden circle* in the monument of *Osmanduas* (which *Diodorus* speaks of out of *Hecateus Milesius*) which was of 365 cubits compass, and divided into so many segments for every day with the observations of the rising and setting of the several stars, and the effects portended by them. And the reason why this year continued in civil use among the *Ægyptians*, is well assigned by *Geminus*, that the *Ægyptians* according to a superstitious observation they had, would needs have their *Festivals* run through every day in the year. But now on the other side, it is as evident that by continual observation the wisest of the *Ægyptian Priests* did discern the necessity of *intercalation*, and that there wanted six hours in every year to make it complete, which every four years would make the *intercalation* of a day necessary; so much by *Diodorus* is affirmed of the *Theban Priests*, who were the best *Astronomers*, and by *Strabo* both of the *Theban* and *Heliopolitan*; and so likewise *Horapollo*, whose work was to interpret the more abstruse Learning of the *Ægyptian Priests*: when, (saith he) the *Ægyptians* would express a year, they name a *quadrant*, because from one rising of the star *Sothis* to another, the fourth part of a day is added, so that the year consists of 365 days, (and a quadrant must be added, because of the antecedents and consequents) therefore every fourth year they reckon a *supernumerary* day. How unjustly *Petavius* hath charged *Scaliger* with fallhood in reference to this testimony of *Horapollo*, meerly because the citation did not appear in that Chapter mentioned by *Scaliger* in the Book which *Petavius* used, hath been already observed by learned men; whereupon *Vossius* condemns *Petavius* of strange incogitancy, because in three Editions mentioned by him, *Scaliger's* citation was right; but *Conringius* hath since pleaded in behalf of *Petavius*, that he might make use of the Edition of *Causinus* distinct from the other three; whereby we see how small a matter will beget a feud between learned men, especially where prejudice hath lodged before, as is too evident in *Petavius* his rough dealing on all occasions, with that very deserving person *Joseph Scaliger*. But to return, from hence by degrees the *Ægyptians* proceeded to make greater periods of years (as *Eudoxus* carried

*Biblioth. l. i.*  
c. 49.

*De Sphæra*  
cap. 6.

*Bibl. l. i. cap. 50.*  
*Geog. l. 17.*

*Hieroglyph. l. i.*  
c. 5.

*De Idol. l. 1.*  
c. 28. *De Hermet. Med. c. 12.*



carried his *Oſtaeteris* into Greece from the *Canicular* year of the *Ægyptians* they framed from this a greater *Canicular* year, which had as many years as a *Julian* hath days; and Lastly, the greatest *Canicular* year which comprehended four of the greater, and consisted of a period of 1461 years. But thus we see, that the great *periods* of years among them rise gradually, as they grow more skilful in the understanding the *nature* of the year; and that they had anciently no certain *periods* to govern themselves by in their *computation* of ancient times. Nay the *Ægyptians* have not, as appears, any certain *Epocha* to go by elder than the *Ægyptian* years of *Nabonasser*, and afterwards from the death of *Alexander*, and *Ptolomy Philadelphus*, and *Augustus* his Victory at *Actium*.

If from the *Ægyptians* we remove our discourse unto the *Grecians*, we are still plunged into greater uncertainties, it being acknowledged by themselves that they had no certain Succession of time before the *Olympiads*. To which purpose the Testimony of *Varro* in *Censorinus* is generally taken notice of, distributing time into three parts, reckoning two of them to be *unknown* and *fabulous*, and the *historical* part of time to begin with the first *Olympiad*. Indeed *Scaliger* and some others are loth to reject all that second part of time as fabulous, which was in the interval between *Deucalion's* flood and the *Olympiads*; and therefore they had rather call it *Heroical*, though much corrupted with *Fables*, and to think that it was *historical* as to *persons*, but *fabulous* as to the actions of those *persons*. But granting this; yet we are wholly to seek for any certain account of the succession of time and persons for want of some certain *Epocha's*, which like the *Pole star* should guide us in our passage through that boundless Ocean of the *Grecian* History. It must be confessed that some of the learned *Heathens* have taken a great deal of pains this way to find out some certain *periods* to fix on in the time before the *Olympiads*, as *Philochorus*, *Apollodorus*, and *Dionysius Halycarnassensis*, and others, who out of their skill in *Astronomy* sought to bring down some certain intervals between the destruction of *Troy*, and the first *Olympick* game of *Pelops*, restored by *Hercules* and *Atreus*. But granting that their *Epocha's* were fixed and certain, that the destruction of *Troy* was upon the 23. of *Thargelion*, the 11th month of the *Attick*

Sect. 2.

Not. in Can.  
Isagog. l. 3.

tick account, and that the *Olympick* game fell out answerably to the ninth of our *July*, and these things were evidently proved from *Astronomical observations*; yet how vast an account of time is lost quite beyond the siege of *Troy*! And besides that, as to all other accidents in the *Intervals* between these two *Epocha's* which could not be proved by *Celestial observations* concurrent with them, they were left at a very great uncertainty still; only they might guess whether they approached nearer to one *Epocha* than the other by the *series* of Families and their *Generations* (three of which made a Century of years) whereby they might come to some conjectures, but could never arrive at any certainty at all.

Señ. 3.

But that which is most to our purpose is, that all the *History* of the *Original* of *Greece*, the Foundations of their several *Kingdoms*, the succession of their first *Kings*, and all that comes under the name of the *History* of their ancient times, is clearly given over by their own most skilful *Chronologers*, as matters out of the reach of any clear evidence. Thence come such great differences concerning the antiquity of their ancient *Kingdoms*; the *Argolick* Kingdom by *Dionysius Halycarnass.* is supposed to be the eldest, and the *Attick* younger than it by 40 *Generations*, which according to their computation comes to a 1000 years, which is impossible; and yet the *Arcadians*, who gave themselves out to be elder than the *Moon*, are supposed to be younger by him than the *Grashoppers* of *Athens* by nine *Generations*; and the *Pthiotica*, under *Deucalion*, younger than the *Arcadia* by 42 *Generations*, which *Scaliger* might well say were impossible and inconsistent. The *Sicyonian* Kingdom is by most supposed to be of greatest antiquity among the *Grecians*, from which *Varro* began his *History*, as *S. Austin* tells us; and yet as to this, *Pausanias* only reckons the names of some *Kings* there, without any succession of time among them; and yet as to those names, *Africanus* (and *Eusebius* from him) dissent from *Pausanias*; and which is most observable, *Homer* reckons *Adrastus*, who is the 23 in the account of *Africanus*, to be the first that reigned in *Sicyon*, whose time was after the institution of the *Olympick* game by *Pelops*: of him thus *Homer*,

De Civit. Dei,  
l. 16. c. 2.

Il. 3.

Καὶ Σικυῶν ὄθρε Ἀδράης ὁ πρῶτ' ἐμβασίλευεν.

Where



Whereby he expresseth *Adraftus* to be the first King of *Sicyon*; and not as *Scaliger* would interpret it, that *Adraftus* was first King of the *Sicyonians*, before he was of the *Argives*; for in the time of *Adraftus* at *Sicyon*, either *Atreus*, or *Thyestes* was King of the *Argives*: for in the second year of *Phæstus* and *Adraftus* his supposed Predecessor in *Sicyon*, *Atreus* restored the *Olympick* game of *Pelops*, in the 41 year of their reign, and they reigned at *Argi* 65 years; Now that *Phæstus* at *Sicyon* is supposed to reign but eight years; and therefore the reign of *Adraftus* at *Sicyon* falls in with that of *Atreus* and *Thyestes* at *Argi* or *Mycena*. Thus we see now how uncertain the account of times was before the beginning of the *Olympiads* among the *Grecians*, which is fully acknowledged by *Diodorus*, and the very reason given which we here insist on, διὰ τὸ μὴ εἶναι παράστημα παρειληθέναι περὶ τέτων πσεύδμενον, that there was no certainty in the ancient Grecian history, because they had no certain term (which he calls *parapegma*, as others *Epocha*, and *Censorinus titulus*) from whence to deduce their accounts. But now from the time of the *Olympiads* (i. e. from the first of them after their restoration by *Iphitus*, wherein the names of the Conquerors were ingraven in *Brass tablets* for the purpose) the succession of time is most certain and historical among the *Grecians*; by which account we have from thence a certain way of commensurating the sacred and prophane History. All the difficulty is in what year of sacred History the *Olympiads* began, which *Scaliger* thus finds out. *Censorinus* writes (in the year of Christ 238 which was of the *Julian period* 4951.) that, *De emend temp.* that year was from the first *Olympiad* of *Iphitus* 1014, the first *Olympiad* was of the *Julian period* 3938. which was according to our learned *Primate A. M.* 3228, and the 35 of *Uzziah King of Judah*, or the 34 as *Capellus* thinks: So that from henceforward we have a clear account of times, which we have demonstrated to have been so uncertain before.

If we come from the *Greeks* further into these *European* parts, we shall find as much darkness and obscurity as to ancient times, if not more, than in those already discoursed of. For the truth is, the account of times before the *Romans* in *Italy*, *Germany*, old *Gallia* or *Britain*, are scarce fit to be discoursed of under any head than that of impostures. Not

that I think those Nations had lain in a perpetual sleep till the *Romans* waked them into some kind of civility, but that they had no certain way of conveying down the transactions of their own and former times to the view of posterity. On which account we may justly reject all those pretended successions of Kings here in *Britain* from *Gomer* and *Brute* as fabulous : And it will be the less wonder it should be so in those then accounted barbarous Nations, when even among those who were the Planters of knowledge and civility among others, the account of their ancient times is so dark, confused, and uncertain : As it would sufficiently appear to any that would take the pains to examine the succession of the two first Dynasties among the *Latines* ; the first before *Aeneas* his coming into *Italy*, and the second of the *Aeneadae* after ; and certainly it will be sufficient ground to question the account of times before, if in the third *Dynasty*, when the succession seems so clear, and so certain an *Epocha* as the building of *Rome*, to deduce their accounts from their *Chronology* be uncertain, which I shall briefly speak to. For although *Porcius Cato* have in *Dionysius* the honour of finding out the first *Palilia* of the City of *Rome* (which was the Feast observed to the honour of the Goddess *Pales* ; in the time of which, the foundations of *Rome* were laid) yet there appears no great certainty in his undertaking ; for therein he was after contradicted by the learned *Roman Varro*. *Dionysius* tells us that *Cato* found by the *Censors tables* the exact time from the expulsion of the Kings, to the time of the Cities being taking by the *Gauls* ; from which time to his own, he could not miss of it from the *Fasti Consulares* ; so that it cannot be denied but that *Cato* might have a certain account of times from the *Regifugium* to the time he writ his *Origines*. But what certainty *Cato* could have from the first *Palilia* of the City to the expulsion of *Tarquin*, we cannot understand. For the succession of Kings must needs be very uncertain, unless it be demonstrated from some publick monuments, or certain records, or some publick actions certainly known to have fallen out precisely in such a year of their several Reigns. Now none of these do occur in the *Roman History*, in all that Interval from the *Palilia* to the *Regifugium* ; so that not only the whole interval, but the time of every particular King's Reign, are very uncertain. And therefore



therefore *Varro* being destitute of any demonstration of that time, had recourse to *L. Tarrutius Firmanus*, to see if by his skill in *Astronomy* he could certainly find out the first *Palilia* of *Rome*: His answer was, that he found that the City was built in the time of an *Eclipse* of the *Sun*, which was in the 3d year of the sixth *Olympiad*; according to which account *Varro* proceeded, and thence arose the difference between the *Palilia Catoniana* and *Varroniana*; the latter falling out in the 23 of *Iphitus*, the other in the 24. But if we believe *Joseph Scaliger*, there could not be an *Eclipse* of the *Sun*, at the time affirmed by *Tarrutius*: But yet granting an *Eclipse* of the *Sun* then, what certainty can we have of the succession of the several *Kings* afterwards, without which there can be no certain computation *ab Urbe condita*? If then the *Romans*, who had so great advantage of knowing times, and were withal so inquisitive concerning the building of their City (which was a thing of no very remote distance) could attain to no absolute certainty without it, what certainty can we expect as to an account of far ancients times, either from them or others, when they had no *Censors tables*, nor *Fasti Consulares* to be guided by? And thus much may serve to shew the great uncertainty of *Heathen Chronology*, as to the giving an account of ancient times.

*V. de Emend  
temp. l. 5 p. 388.*

And yet were it only an uncertainty as to *Chronology*; we might better bear with it; for the mistake merely in computation of times were not so dangerous (any further than the credibility of the History depends on the computation, as in point of antiquity) if we were but certain that the persons and actions related of them were such as they are reported to be. But that which adds much to the confusion and uncertainty of *Heathen history*, is, the frequency of *Impostures*, which are more hard to be discovered, in that there are no authentick Histories of those times extant, which hath both given occasion to variety of impostures, and much hindered their discovery. For the curiosity of men leading them back into a search after ancient times, it makes them exceeding credulous in embracing whatever pretends to give them any conduct through those dark and obscure paths of ancient History: And the world hath never been wanting of such as would be ready to abuse the simple credulity of well-meaning, but less wary men; but those ages have been most feracious in the pro-

*Sect. 5.*

duction of such persons, which have pretended to more Learning than they had. The pretence of Learning made such persons appear, and the want of it made them not be discovered. Thus it was not only of old among the *Chaldean* and *Egyptian Priests*, and the *Grecian Poets* and *Historians*, of whom we have spoken already; but even among those who might have learned more truth from the *Religion* they professed, than to think it stood in need of their lyes. For there can be no greater disparagement offered to truth, than to defend it with any thing but it self, nothing laying truth so open to suspicion, as when fallhood comes to be its *advocate*: And a false testimony discovered, doth more prejudice to a good cause, than it could any ways advantage it, were it not discovered; and therefore their labours have been as serviceable to the world who have discovered *Impostures*, as those who have directly maintained truth against its open opposers, those being so much more dangerous, in that they appear in the disguise of truth, and therefore are with more difficulty discovered. Such a one was that *ignis fatuus* that appeared in a kind of *twilight* in the *Christian* world between the former darkness of *Barbarism*, and the approaching light of *knowledge*; I mean *Annius Viterbiensis*, who like *Hannibal* in passing the *Alps*, not finding a way ready to his mind, sets himself to burning the woods, and firing the rocks, and dissolving them with vinegar to make a passage through them: So *Annius* being beset in those *snowy* and *gray-headed Alps* of ancient history, and finding no way clear for him according to his fancy, he labours to *burn down* all certain *Records*, to *eat through* the credit of undoubted Authors, to make a more free passage from his own history, which he deduceth suitably to *Scripture* for the concurrent testimony of the eldest *Historians*. To which purpose, a *New Berosus*, *Manetho*, *Philo*, *Metasthenes* (as he mistook for *Megasthenes*) and *Xenophon* must put on a grave disguise, and walk abroad the world with a *mantle* of *Antiquity* about their shoulders, although they were nothing else but airy *Phantasms*, covered over with the *Cowl* of the Monk of *Viterbo*. For being himself somewhat more versed in the history of those elder times than generally persons were in the age he lived in, he made that unhappy use of his skill, to play the *Mountebank* with his learning; and to abuse the credulity of those who have better *stomachs* than *palates*, and can sooner swallow down the *composi-*  
*tions*



tions that are given them, than find out the *Ingredients* of them. Thus *Annius* puts a good face on his *new-old Authors*, bidsthem be bold and confident, and they would fare the better : And the truth is, they tell their story so punctually in all circumstances, in those things which had no certain conveyance to posterity, that that were sufficient ground to any intelligent person to question their authority. But lest his Authors should at any time want an *Interpreter* to make out their full meaning, he sets himself a large Commentary upon them, And certainly he was the fittest person in the world to doe it; for, *cujus est condere, ejus est interpretari*; none so fit to explain *Annius* as *Annius* himself. The whole story of this Imposture, how he made the Inscriptions himself, and hid them under ground, how they were digged thence and brought to *Annius*; how *Annius* caused them to be sent to the *Magistrates*, and after published them in the *equipage* they are in, are at large related by that learned *Bishop Antonius Augustinus*, from *Latinus Latinus*.

Dialog. 11.

From a like quarry to this, came out those other famous *Inscriptions*, walking under the specious title of *Antiquitatum Etruscarum fragmenta*, wherein, besides many palpable incongruities to the customs of those eldest times, discovered partly by *Leo Allatius* in his Discourse concerning them, there are so many particular stories and circumstances related concerning *Noah's* being in *Italy*, and other things so far beyond any probability of reason, that it is a wonder there are yet any persons pretending to Learning, who should build their discourses upon such rotten and sandy foundations as these *Inscriptions* are. But though *Ixion* might, *Jupiter* would never have been deceived with a *Cloud* instead of *Juno*; so, though persons unacquainted with the lineaments of *truth*, may be easily imposed on with appearances instead of her: yet such persons who have sagacity enough to discern the *air* of her countenance from the *paint* of *forgeries*, will never suffer themselves to be over-reached by such vain pretenders. But these *Impostors* are like the *Astrologers* at *Rome*, ever banished, and yet ever there; and so these are ever exploded by all Lovers of *truth*, yet always find some to applaud and entertain them: Although it be more difficult to doe so now in the present light of *knowledge*, and all advantages for *learning*, than it was in those elder times, when the *Heathen Priests* pre-

Sect. 6.

pretended to the *Monopoly of Learning* among themselves, and made it one of their great designs to keep all others in dependence on themselves, thereby to keep up their *veneration* the better among the people. And therefore all the *Records* they had of *Learning* or *History*, were carefully lockt up, and preserved among the *Priests*, and lest at any time others might get a view of them, they were sure to preserve them in a *peculiar Character* distinct from that in civil and common use. By which means the *Heathen Priests* had all imaginable opportunities and conveniences for deceiving the silly people, and thereby keeping them in an *obsequious Ignorance*, which is never the *Mother* of any true *Devotion*, but of the greatest *Superstition*.

Seft. 7.

Diod. l. 3.

It is well known of the *Ægyptian Priests*, that the *sacred Characters* of their *Temples* were seldom made known to any but such as were of their own number and family, (the *Priesthood* being there *hereditary*) or such others as by long converse had insinuated themselves into their society, as some of the *Greek Philosophers* and *Historians* had done: And yet we have some reason to think they were not over-free and communicative to some of them, by the slender account they give of several things, which are supposed to be well known among the *Ægyptians*. That the *Phœnician Priests* had their *peculiar* and *sacred Characters* too, is evident from the words of *Philo Byblius* concerning *Sanconiathon*, if we take *Bochartus* his Exposition of them: He tells us that his *History* was compared, *πῆς καὶ τῶν ἀδύτων εὐρεθεῖσιν, ἀποκρύφους Ἀμμυνέων γεγραμμένων* αὐτῷ ἐκ τῶ πᾶσι γινώσκοντα, *with the Inscriptions in the Temples written in the Ammunean Letters, which are known to few: Literæ Ammuneorum* (saith *Bochartus*) *sunt literæ Templorum, literæ in sacris exceptæ*. For *𐤋𐤍* is the *Sun*, thence *𐤋𐤍* the *Temple of the Sun*, whom the *Phœnicians* worshipped as their principal Deity, under the name of *Beel-samen*, the *Lord of Heaven*. The same Author tells us out of *Diogenes Laertius*, of a Book of *Democritus*, *περὶ τῶν ἐν Βαβυλῶνι ἱερῶν γεγραμμάτων* by which it is evident that the *Babylonian Priests* had their *sacred Characters* too: And of a Testimony of *Theodoret* of all the *Græcian Temples*, *ἐν τοῖς Ἑλληνικοῖς ναοῖς ἱστοί πνὲς ἦσαν χαρακτηριστὲς γεγραμμάτων, ἧς ἱερὰς καὶ ἀσχετὰς*, *that they had some peculiar Characters which were called sacred*. But that learned Author thinks

Euseb. Præp. Evang. l. 1. c. 10.

Geogr. sacr. p. 2. l. 2. c. 17.

Quest. in Gen. 61.



thinks there is no necessity of understanding it peculiarly of the *Græcians*, because the *Greek Fathers* called all *Heathens* by the name of *Greeks*; but if so, the Testimony is the larger, and amounts to an universal Testimony of the *Heathen Temples*.

Neither was this only peculiar to *them*, if we believe some persons of greater *Learning* than *Judgment*, who attribute this distinction of *sacred* and *vulgar Characters* to the *Jews* as well as others, but without any probability of reason. For these learned men being strongly possessed with the opinion of the *modern Jews* concerning the *Antiquity* of the present *Hebrew Characters*, and finding themselves pressed not only with the *Testimony* of some *ancient Rabbins*, but with the stronger evidence of the *ancient shekels* about *Solomon's* time, inscribed with the *Samaritan letters*, have at last found this *Evasion*, that the *Samaritan letters* were in *vulgar use*; but the present *Characters* were then *sacred*, and not made *common* till after the time of the *Captivity*. But this seems to be a mere *shift*, found out by some *modern Jews*, and greedily embraced by their Followers, because thereby they are in hopes to evade the strength of the contrary arguments, which otherwise they can find no probable solution of. And a mere shift it will appear to be, to any one that considers on how little ground of reason it stands: For none of those reasons which held for such a distinction of Characters among the *Heathens*, can have any place among the *Jews*. For it was never any part of *God's* design to have the Law kept from the peoples view. *Truth* is never so fearfull of being *seen abroad*; it is only falsehood that walks under disguises, and must have its hiding-places to retreat to: Nay, *God* expressly commanded it as a duty of all the *Jews*, to search and study his Law, which they could not doe, if it were locked up from them in an *unknown Character*. Did not *God* himself promulge it among the people of *Israel* by the *Ministry of Moses*? Did he not command it to be *as frontlets between their eyes*, and *signs upon their hands* (not that *Phylacteries* should be made of the Law to wear, as the *Pharisees* interpreted it, and others from them have mistaken) but that they should have the Law in continual remembrance, as if it were always between their eyes, and ingraven upon their hands. Again, if we suppose the Law to be among the people, but in the *vulgar character*,  
I would

Sect. 8.

Exod. 13. 16.  
Deut. 6. 8.

I would fain know, what *sanctity*, *majesty*, and *authority* there was in that *character* more than in the words and matter? and if there were, how comes the *vulgar* use of it to be no where forbidden? and how durst *Ezra*, as is supposed, after the *Captivity*, profane so *sacred* a thing by exposing it to *common* use? But granting them yet further, that it was *lawfull*, but not *usefull*, to make use of that *sacred character*; I demand then, how comes that *disuse* to continue so punctually till the time of *Ezra*, and that it should never be divulged before? when there was so great reason to make it common, since the *square letters* are less operose, more expedite and facile, than the *Samaritan*, which is, when time serves, used as a plea for their great *Antiquity*. But yielding yet more, that the *Sacred Character* was only used for the *authentick copy* of the *Law*, which was to decide all differences of other copies (which some run to as their last shift) I appeal to any man's *reason*, whether this be not the most improbable of all? For how could such a copy be the *Judge* of all others, which could not be read or understood by those who appealed to it? Or was the knowledge and reading of this *character* peculiar to the *High Priest*, and conveyed down as a *Cabala* from one to another? but how many incongruities would follow hence, in case one *High Priest* should die before his Son was capable of understanding the letters, and so that *Sacred treasure* must needs be lost; or had they it all by *inspiration*, and understood the *Sacred Character* by *Urim* and *Thummim*? Thus every way, this opinion among the *Jews* is pressed with inconveniences, but it was most suitable to the *Heathen Priests* to maintain a *Meum* and *Tuum* between their own *Character* and the *vulgar*; For hereby they prohibited all prying into their mysteries by any, but those who had the same *Interest* with themselves, and therefore were unlikely to discover any thing that might lessen their reputation. Whereas, had there been nothing but *Truth* in their *Records*, or that *Truth* had been for their *Interest*, what need had there been of so great reservedness and privacy? but when the discovery of truth would undeceive the world, it was their *Interest* to lock it up, and to give out such things to the *vulgar*, which might advance themselves and please them; which *artifices* of theirs give no small ground to *question* the *credibility* of their *Histories*.

Especially



Especially if we add what we promised in the *last place*, to shew the want of *credibility* in the report of ancient times among them, which was not only *defectiveness*, and *uncertainty*, but *apparent partiality to themselves, and inconsistency with each other*. How evident is it in all these Nations we have spoken to, how much they strive to *inbance the reputation* of their own Nation, and to that end blend the History of other Nations with their own, to make theirs seem the greater? How much do the *Egyptians* tell us of the excellency of their ancient Laws and Government? and yet how evident is it, from their own Histories, that no such Laws were observed by their Kings as they speak of? Can we think that such Kings as *Chemmis* and the rest of them, who built those vast structures of the *Pyramids*, and imployed *Myriads* of men for so many years for the doing of them, would be content to be so dieted by their *Laws*, as *Hecatæus* and *Diodorus* tell us they were to be? Nay it seems to be very suspicious, that the great enterprizes of their famous *Sesoosis* are merely *fabulous*, and some think an attributing to themselves, what was done by the *Assyrian Emperour* in his time. By which we may guess, what to think of the great *Conquests* of *Osiris* and *Isis*, and their subduing almost the whole world to them. And it is most evident how partial the *Egyptians* are in dissembling their greatest losses; as is clear in the story of the *Conquest* of *Pharao Neco* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, Jer. 46. 12. of which there is not the least mention in *Herodotus* or *Diodorus*; But on the contrary, *Herodotus* tells us this *Necos*, as he calls him, conquered the *Syrians* at *Magdalos*; and the story of *Vaphres* and *Amasis* in him seems to be only a disguise of *Nebuchadnezzar's* Conquest; onely lest men should think them conquered by a *Foreigner*, they make *Amasis* to be an *Egyptian Plebeian*. Again, what a vast number of *Cities* doth *Diodorus* tell us of that were in *Egypt* in their eldest times? no less than 18000. when yet himself confesseth in the time of *Ptolomæus Lagi*, there were reckoned but somewhat above 3000 *Cities*, and then *Ægypt* was the most *populous* that ever it had been. How probable doth this sound, that in those eldest times such vast multitudes of *Cities* should be erected? But the truth is, it is not unsuitable to their opinion of the production of the first men, which were caused, say they, by the

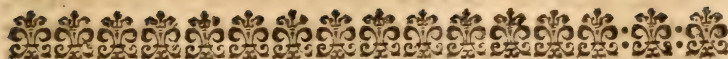
Lib. 2.

Biblioth. l. 1.

*beat of Sun*, and the *mud of Nilus*; and it is certain then they might be the most *populous Nation* in the world: for there could be no defect as to either *efficient* or *material cause*, there being *mud* enough to *produce Myriads*, and the *Sun* hot enough to *impregnate* it. The *partiality* of other Nations hath been already discoursed of in our passage; and so likewise hath their *mutual repugnancy* to, and *inconsistency* with, each other: Which yet might be more fully manifested from the *contradictions* in reference to the *Egyptian History* between *Manetho*, *Herodotus*, *Diodorus*, *Dicearchus*, *Eratoſthenes*, and all who have spoken of it; as to the *Aſſyrian Empire* between *Herodotus*, *Diodorus*, and *Julius Africanus*; as to the *Persian Empire* between *Herodotus* and *Cteſias*, and those in no inconsiderable things, as is evident in *Photius* his *excerpta* out of him. Among the *Greeks* we have already discovered it as to their *History* and *Geography*; and if we should enter into their *Theology*, and the *History* of that, we should find their other differences inconsiderable, if compared with these. Of which we may partly make a conjecture by the incredible spite that is born by the gravest *Greek Authors*, as *Strabo*, *Plutarch*, and others, towards *Eumerus Siculus*, for offering to deliver the *History* of *Jupiter*, which he saith, he transcribed from the *golden pillar in the Temple of Jupiter Triphyllius in Panchotis*.

But I suppose enough hath been discovered already, to prove that there is no credibility in any of those *Heathen Histories*, which pretend to give an account of ancient times, there being in all of them so much defect and insufficiency, so great uncertainty and confusion, so much partiality and inconsistency with each other. It remains now that I proceed to demonstrate the credibility of that account of ancient times, which is reported in the *Sacred Scriptures*, which will be the second part of our Task.






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## B O O K II.

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### C H A P. I.

#### The certainty of the Writings of *Moses*:

*In order to the proving the truth of Scripture-history, several Hypotheses laid down. The first concerns the reasonableness of preserving the ancient History of the world in some certain Records, from the importance of the things, and the inconveniencies of meer Tradition or constant Revelation. The second concerns the certainty that the Records under Moses his name, were undoubtedly his. The certainty of a matter of fact enquired into in general, and proved as to this particular by universal Consent, and settling a Common-wealth upon his Laws. The impossibility of an Impostor as to the Writings of Moses demonstrated. The pleas to the contrary largely answered.*

**H**AVING sufficiently demonstrated the want of *credibility* in the account of the ancient times, given by those Nations who have made the greatest pretence to *Learning* and *Antiquity* in the world, we now proceed to evince the *credibility* and certainty of that account which is given us in *sacred Scriptures*: In order to which I shall premise these following *Hypotheses*. Sect. I.

*It stands to the greatest reason, that an account of things so concerning and remarkable, should not be always left to the uncertainty of an oral Tradition; but should be timely entred into certain Records, to be preserved to the memory of posterity. For it being of concernment to the world, in order to the Establishment of belief as to future things, to be fully settled*

Hyp. I.

in the belief *that all things past were managed by Divine Providence*, there must be some certain Records of former Ages, or else the mind of Man will be perpetually *hovering* in the greatest uncertainties: Especially where there is such a mutual *dependence and concatenation* of one thing with another, as there is in all the Scripture-history. For take away but any one of the main Foundations of the *Mosaical history*, all the *Superstructure* will be exceedingly weakned, if it doth not fall quite to the ground. For Man's *obligation to obedience unto God*, doth necessarily suppose his *original* to be from him; his *hearkning to any proposals of favour from God*, doth suppose his *Apostasie and fall*; God's *designing to shew mercy and favour to fallen Man*, doth suppose that there must be some way whereby the *Great Creator* must *reveal* himself as to the *Conditions* on which fallen Man may expect a *recovery*; the *revealing of these Conditions* in such a way whereon a *suspicious* (because *guilty*) creature may firmly rely, doth suppose so certain a *recording* of them, as may be least liable to any suspicion of imposture or deceit. For although nothing else be in it self necessary from *God to Man*, in order to his *Salvation*, but the bare *revealing* in a certain way the *Terms* on which he must expect it; yet considering the unbounded Nature of *Divine Goodness*, respecting not only the good of some particular Persons, but of the whole *Society of mankind*, it stands to the greatest reason that such a *Revelation* should be so *propounded*, as might be with equal *certainly* conveyed to the *community of mankind*. Which could not with any such evidence of *credibility* be done by *private and particular Revelations* (which give satisfaction only to the inward Senses of the partakers of them) as by a publick *recording* of the matters of *Divine Revelation* by such a *Person* who is enabled to give the world all *reasonable satisfaction*, that what he did was not of any private design of his own head; but that he was *deputed* to it by no less than *Divine Authority*. And therefore it stands to the highest reason, that where *Divine Revelation* is *necessary* for the certain requiring of *Assent*, the matter to be *believed* should have a *certain uniform conveyance* to Mens minds, rather than that perpetually *New Revelations* should be required for the making known of those things; which being once *recorded*, are not liable to so many

*impostures*



*impostures* as the other way might have been under pretended *Revelations*. For then Men are not put to a continual Trial, of every Person pretending *Divine Revelation*, as to the evidences which he brings of *Divine Authority*, but the great *matters* of concernment being already recorded and attested by all *rational evidence* as to the truth of the things, their minds therein rest satisfied without being under a continual *hesitancy*, lest the *Revelation* of one should *contradict* another.

For supposing that God had left the *matters* of *Divine Revelation* unrecorded at all, but left them to be *discovered* in every Age by a *spirit* of *prophecy*, by such a multitude as might be sufficient to inform the world of the truth of the things; we cannot but conceive that an innumerable Company of *croaking Enthusiasts* would be continually pretending *Commissions* from Heaven, by which the minds of Men would be left in continual *distraction*, because they would have no certain *infallible rules* given them, whereby to difference the *good* and *evil spirit* from each other. But now supposing God to inspire some particular Persons, not only to *reveal*, but to *record Divine Truths*, then whatever *evidences* can be brought attesting a *Divine Revelation* in them, will likewise prove the undoubted *certainty* and *infallibility* of those writings, it being impossible that Persons employed by a *God of truth* should make it their design to impose upon the world; which gives us a *rational account*, why the *wise God* did not suffer the *History* of the *world* to lie still *unrecorded*, but made choice of such a *person* to record it, who gave abundant evidence to the world that he acted no private design, but was peculiarly employed by *God himself* for the doing of it, as will appear afterwards. Besides, we find by our former Discourse, how liable the most certain *Tradition* is to be corrupted in progress of time, where there are no standing Records, though it were at first delivered by Persons of undoubted credit. For we have no reason to doubt, but that the *Tradition of the old World*, the *flood* and the *consequences* of it, with the *nature* and *worship* of the *true God*, were at first spread over the greatest part of the world in its first *Plantations*; yet we see how soon for want of certain *conveyance*, all the ancient *Tradition* was *corrupted* and abused into the greatest *Idolatry*. Which might be less wondered at,

Self. 2.

had

had it been only in those parts which were furthest remote from the seat of those grand Transactions; but thus we find it was even among those families who had the nearest residence to the place of them, and among those Persons who were not far off in a lineal descent from the Persons mainly concerned in them; as is most evident in the family out of which *Abraham* came (who was himself the tenth from *Noah*) yet of them it is said, *that they served other Gods*. How unlikely then was it, that this Tradition should be afterwards preserved entire, when the People God had peculiarly chosen to himself, were so mixed among the *Egyptians*, and so prone to the *Idolatry* of the Nations round about them, and that even after God had given them a written Law attested with the greatest miracles? what would they have done then, had they never been brought forth of *Egypt* by such signs and wonders, and had no certain Records left to preserve the Memory of former Ages? Thus we see how much it stands to the greatest reason, that so memorable things should be digested into sacred Records.

Joh. 24. 2. Sect. 3. Hyp. 2. We have as great certainty that *Moses* was the Author of the Records going under his name, as we can have of any matter of fact done at so great a distance of time from us. We are to consider that there are two very distinct Questions to be thought of, concerning a Divine Revelation to any Person at a considerable distance of time from us; and those are what evidences can be given that the matters recorded are of a true divine revelation; and what evidence we have of the truth of the matter of fact, that such things were recorded by such persons. They who do not carefully distinguish between these two Questions, will soon run themselves into an inextricable Labyrinth, when they either seek to understand themselves, or explain to others the grounds on which they believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God. The first step in order to which must be the proving the undoubted certainty of the matter of fact, or the truth of the History, that such persons were really existent, and did either do or record the things we speak of: After this, succeeds the other to prove, not only the real existence of the things, but that the persons who recorded the things, were assisted by an infallible Spirit; then there can be no reason at all to doubt, but those records are



are the Word of God. The first of these, is, that which at present we enquire after, the certainty of the matter of fact, that the Records under the name of *Moses* were undoubtedly his. And here it will be most unreasonable for any to seek for further *evidence* and *demonstration* of it, than the *matter* to be proved is *capable* of. But if they should, I suppose we have sufficient reason to demonstrate the folly of such a demand, and that on these accounts.

1. Whoever yet undertook to bring *matters* of *fact* into *Mathematical demonstrations*, or thought he had ground to question the certainty of any thing that was not proved in a *Mathematical* way to him? who would ever undertake to prove that *Archimedes* was killed at *Syracuse* by any of the *demonstrations* he was then about? or that *Euclide* was the undoubted Author of the *Geometry* under his name? or do men question these things for want of such *demonstrations*? Yet this is all we at present desire, but the same liberty here which is used in any thing of a like nature.

2. I demand of the *person* who denies this *moral certainty* to be *sufficient* for an *assent*, whether he doth question every thing in the world, which he was not present at the doing of himself? If he be peremptorily resolved to *believe* nothing but *what* he *sees*, he is fit for nothing but a *Voyage* to *Anticyra*, or to be soundly *purged* with *Hellebore* to free him from those *cloudy humours* that make him suspect the whole world to be an *imposture*. But we cannot suppose any man so destitute of reason, as to question the truth of every matter of fact which he doth not see himself; if he doth then *firmly believe* any thing, there must be supposed sufficient *grounds* to induce him to such a belief. And then what ground can there be to question the *certainty* of such things which have as great evidence as any of those things have which he most firmly believes? and this is all we desire from him.

3. Do we not see that the most *concerning* and *weighty actions* of mens *lives*, are built on no other *foundation* than this *moral certainty*? yet men do not in the least question the truth of the thing they rely upon: As is most evident in all *titles* to *estates* derived from *Ancestors*, either by *donation* or *purchase*: In all *trading*, which goes upon the *moral certainty*, that there are such places as the *Indies*, or *France*, or *Spain*, &c.

In

In all *journeyings*, that there is such a place, as that I am going to, and this is the way thither; for these we have but this *moral certainty*; for the *contrary* to both these are *possible*, and the *affirmatives* are *indemonstrable*. In *eating* and *drinking* there is a *possibility* of being poisoned by every bit of meat or drop of drink; do we therefore continually doubt, whether we shall be so or no? *Chiefly* this is seen in all *natural affection* and piety in *Children* towards *Parents*, which undoubtedly suppose the truth of that, which it was *impossible* they could be *witnesses* of themselves; *viz. their coming out of their Mothers wombs*. And doth any one think this sufficient ground to question his Mother, because the contrary is impossible to be demonstrated to him? In short, then, either we must destroy all *Historical faith* out of the world, and believe nothing (though never so much attested) but what we see our selves or else we must acknowledge, that a *moral certainty* is a *sufficient foundation* for an *undoubted assent*, not such a one *cui non potest subesse falsum*, but such a one *cui non subest dubium*, i. e. an *assent undoubted*, though not *infallible*. By which we see what little reason the *Atheist* on one side can have to question the *truth* of the *Scriptures*, as to the *History* of it; and what little ground the *Papists* on the other side have to make a *pretence* of the *necessity* of *infallibility*, as to the *proposal* of such things where *moral certainty* is *sufficient*, that is, to the *matter of fact*.

Seet. 4.

Which I now come to prove, as to the subject in hand; viz. *That the writings of Moses are undoubtedly his*, which I prove by a *two-fold Argument*: 1. *An universal consent of persons, who were best able to know the truth of the things in question*. 2. *The settling of a Commonwealth upon the Laws delivered by Moses*. 1. *The universal Consent of persons most capable of judging in the Case in hand*. I know nothing the most scrupulous and inquisitive mind can possibly desire in order to satisfaction, concerning any matter of fact, beyond an *universal Consent* of such persons who have a greater *capacity of knowing the truth* of it than we can have: And those are all such persons who have lived nearest those times when the things were done, and have best understood the Affairs of the times when the things were pretended to be done. Can we possibly conceive, that among the people of the *Jews*, who



who were so exceedingly prone to transgress the *Law of Moses*, and to fall into *Idolatry*, but if there had been any the least suspicion of any falsity or imposture in the writings of *Moses*, the ring-leaders of their revolts would have sufficiently promulged it among them, as the most *plausible plea* to draw them off from the worship of the true *God*? Can we think that a Nation and Religion so *maligned* as the *Jewish* were, could have escaped *discovery*, if there had been any deceit in it, when so many lay in wait continually to expose them to all *Contumelies* imaginable? Nay, among themselves in their frequent *Apostasies*, and occasions given for such a pretence, how comes this to be never heard of, nor in the least questioned, whether the *Law* was *undoubtedly* of *Moses* his writing or no? What an excellent plea would this have been for *Jeroboam's Calves* in *Dan* and *Bethel*: for the *Samaritan's Temple* on *Mount Gerizim*, could any the least suspicion have been raised among them, concerning the *authentickness* of the *fundamental Records* of the *Jewish Commonwealth*? And which is most observable, the *Jews* who were a people strangely *suspicious* and *incredulous*, while they were fed and clothed with *miracles*, yet could never find ground to question this. Nay, and *Moses* himself, we plainly see, was hugely *envied* by many of the *Israelites* even in the *wilderness*, as is evident in the *Conspiracy* of *Corah* and his complices, and that on this very ground, *that he took too much upon him*; how unlikely then is it, that amidst so many enemies he should dare to venture any thing into *publick records*, which was not most *undoubtedly true*; or undertake to prescribe a *Law* to oblige the people to posterity? Or that after his own Age any thing should come out under his name, which would not be presently detected by the *emulatours* of his glory? What then, is the thing it self *incredible*? surely *not*, that *Moses* should write the records we speak of. Were not they able to understand the *truth* of it? What? not those, who were in the same Age, and conveyed it down by a certain tradition to posterity? Or did not the *Israelites* all constantly *believe* it? What? not they, who would sooner part with their *lives* and *fortunes*, than admit any *variation* or alteration as to their *Law*?

Sect. 5.

Well, but if we should suppose *the whole Jewish Nation partial to themselves, and that out of honour to the memory of so great a person as Moses, they should attribute their ancient Laws and Records to him*: Which is all that *Infidelity* its self can imagine in this Case; Yet this cannot be with any shadow of reason pretended. For,

I. 1. Who were those *persons*, who did give out this *Law* to the *Jews* under *Moses* his name? Certainly they, who undertake to *contradict* that which is received by *common consent*, must bring stronger and clearer evidence than that on which that consent is grounded; or else their *exceptions* deserve to be rejected with the highest indignation. What proof can be then brought, that not only the *Jewish Nation*, but the whole *Christian world* hath been so lamentably *besfooled* to believe those things with an undoubted assent, which are only the contrivances of some cunning men?

2. At what time could these things be contrived? Either while the *memory* of *Moses* and his actions were *remaining*, or *afterwards*. First, how could it possibly be, when his *memory* was *remaining*? for then all things were so *fresh* in their *memories*, that it was *impossible* a thing of this universal nature could be forged of him. If *after*, then I demand, whether the people had observed the *Law* of *Moses* before or no? if *not*, then they must certainly know it at the time of its *promulgation* to be *counterfeit*; for had it been from *Moses*, it would have been observed before their times; if it *was observed before*, then either *continually* down from the time of *Moses*, or not? If *continually down*, then it was of *Moses* his doing, if we suppose him to have had that *Authority* among the people which the *objection* supposeth; if *not*, then still the nearer *Moses* his time, the more *difficult* such a *counterfeiting* could be; because the *Constitutions* which *Moses* had left among them, would have remained in their *memories*, whereby they would easily reject all *pretences* and *counterfeits*.

3. How can we conceive the *Nation* of the *Jews* would have ever embraced such a *Law*, had it not been of *Moses* his enacting among them in that state of time when he did? For then the people were in fittest capacity to receive a *Law*, being grown a *great people*, and therefore *necessary* to have  
Laws;



*Laws*; newly delivered from bondage, and therefore wanting *Laws* of their own; and entering into a settled state of Commonwealth, which was the most proper season of giving *Laws*.

Sect. 6.

These considerations make it so clear, that it is almost impossible, to conceive the Nation of the *Jews* could have their *Laws* given to them but at the time of their being in the wilderness, before they were settled in *Canaan*. For suppose we at present, to gratifie so far the objection, that these *Laws* were brought forth long after the constitution of the government and the national settlement, under *Moses* his name; how improbable, nay how impossible is it to alter the fundamental *Laws* of a Nation after long settlement? what confusion of interests doth this bring? what disturbance among all sorts of people, who must be disseised of their rights, and brought to such strange unwonted customs so seemingly against their interests, as many of the Constitutions among the *Jews* were? For can we imagine, that a people always devoted to their own interest, would after it had been quietly settled in their Land, by Constitutions after the custom of other Nations, presently under a pretence of a copy of *Laws* found (that were pretended to be given by one in former Ages of great esteem, called *Moses*) throw open all their former inclosures, and part with their former *Laws*, for these of which they have no evidence, but the words of those that told it them? We have a clear instance for this among the *Romans*; although there were great evidence given of the undoubted certainty, that the Books found in *Numa's* grave by *Petilius* were his, yet because they were adjudged by the Senate to be against the present *Laws*, they were without further enquiry adjudged to be burnt. Was not here the greatest likelihood that might be, that these should have taken place among the *Romans*, for the great veneration for wisdom which *Numa* was in among them, and the great evidence that these were certain remainders of his, wherein he gave a true account of the superstitions in use among them? yet lest the state should be unsettled by it, they were prohibited so much as a publick view, when the *Prætor* had sworn they were against the established *Laws*. Can we then conceive the Jewish Nation would have embraced so burdensome and ceremonious a Law as *Moses's* was, had it been brought among them in such a way as the Books

of Numa, though with all imaginable evidence, that it was undoubtedly his, especially when they were engaged to the observation of some Laws or Customs already, by which their Commonwealth had been established : And withall these Laws of Moses seeming so much against the interest and good husbandry of a Nation, as all the neighbour Nations thought, who for that accused them to be an idle and sloathful people, as they judged by their resting wholly one day in seven, the great and many solemn feasts they had, the repairing of all the males to Jerusalem thrice a year ; the Sabbatical years, years of Jubilee, &c. These things were apparently against the interest of such a Nation, whose great subsistence was upon pasturage and agriculture. So that it is evident these Laws respected not the outward interest of the Nation, and so could not be the contrivance of any Politicians among them, but did immediately aim at the honor of the God whom they served, for whom they were to part even with their civil interests : The doing of which by a people generally taken notice of for a particular Love of their own concerns, is an impregnable argument these Laws could not take place among them, had they not been given by Moses at the time of their unsettlement, and that their future settlement did depend upon their present observation of them ; which is an evidence too that they could be of no less that divine original : Which was more than I was to prove at present.

Sect. 7.

4. Were not these writings undoubtedly Moses's ; whence should the neighbour Nations about the Jews notwithstanding the hatred of the Jewish Religion, retain so venerable an opinion of the wisdom of Moses ? The Egyptians accounted him one of their Priests (which notes the esteem they had of his learning) as appears by the testimonies produced out of Chæremon and Manetho by Josephus. Diodorus Siculus speaks of him with great respect among the famous Legislators, and so doth Strabo, who speaks in commendation of the Religion established by him. The testimony of Longinus is sufficiently known, that Moses was no man of any vulgar wit (ἐκ δὲ τοῦ αὐτοῦ) Chalcidius calls him sapientissimus Moses (although I must not dissemble that Chalcidius hath been, I think, undeservedly reckoned among heathen writers, though he comments on Plato's Timæus, it being most probable that he was a Christian

C. App l. 1. Bib.  
4. 1. Geog. 16.  
De sublim.



*stian Platonist*, which might more probably make *Vaninus* call *V. Vof. de Idol.*  
him *circumforaneum blateronem*) but though we exempt *Chal.* l. 2. c. 45.  
*cidius* out of the number of those *Heathens*, who have born  
testimony to the *wisdom* of *Moses*, yet there are number e-  
nough besides him produced by *Justin Martyr*, *Cyril*, and  
others, whose evidence is clear and full to make us undoubt- *V. Grot. An. de*  
edly believe, that there could never have been so *universal* *Ver. Rel. Chr.*  
and *uninterrupted* a tradition concerning the *writings* and *Laws* *l. 2.*  
of *Moses*, had they not been certainly his, and conveyed  
down in a continual succession from his time to our present  
age. Which will be yet more clear, if we consider in the  
second place, *that the national Constitution and settlement of*  
*the Jews, did depend on the truth of the Laws and Writings of*  
*Moses.* Can we have more undoubted evidence, that there  
were such persons as *Solon*, *Lycurgus*, and *Numa*; and that the  
*Laws* bearing their names were theirs, than the *History* of the  
several *Commonwealths* of *Athens*, *Sparta*, and *Rome*, who  
were governed by those *Laws*? When *writings* are not of ge-  
neral concernment, they may be more easily counterfeited; but  
when they concern the *rights*, *privileges*, and *government* of a  
Nation, there will be enough whose *interest* will lead them to  
prevent impostures. It is no easie matter to forge a *Magna*  
*Charta*, and to invent *Laws*; mens caution and prudence is  
never so quick-sighted as in matters which concern their *estates*  
and *freeholds*. The general *interest* of men lies contrary to such  
impostures, and therefore they will prevent their obtaining  
among them. Now the *Laws* of *Moses* are incorporated into  
the very *Republick* of the *Jews*, and their subsistence and Go-  
vernment depends upon them, their *Religion* and *Laws* are so  
interwoven one with the other, that one cannot be broken  
off from the other. Their *right* to their *temporal possessions*  
in the land of *Canaan* depends on their owning the *Sovereignty*  
of *God* who gave them to them; and on the truth of the  
*History* recorded by *Moses* concerning the *promises* made to  
the *Patriarchs*. So that on that account it was impossible  
those *Laws* should be counterfeited on which the welfare of a  
Nation depended, and according to which they were governed  
ever since they were a *Nation*. So that I shall now take it to  
be sufficiently proved, that the *writings* under the name  
of *Moses* were undoubtedly his; for none, who acknowledge  
the

the *Laws* to have been his, can have the face to deny the *History*, there being so necessary a *connexion* between them; and the *book* of *Genesis* being nothing else but a general and very necessary *introduction* to that which follows. I deny not but the *history* of *Moses* might, according to the *tradition* of the *Jews*, and the *belief* of others, be revised by *Ezra*, or the *men* of the *great Synagogue* after the *Jews* return from captivity, as appears by the *names* of *places*, and other passages not suitable to the time of *Moses*; but I utterly deny that the *Pentateuch* was not of *Moses* his penning, or that it was only a *Collection* out of the *Diaries* and *Annals* of the *Nation*: For throughout the *Scripture* the very historical passages are attributed to *Moses*, and in all probability the *Samaritan Pentateuch* bears date before the *Captivity*; by which it still appears that those Books are truly the Books of *Moses*.

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C H A P.



## C H A P. II.

*Moses his certain knowledge of what he writ.*

*The third Hypothesis concerns the certainty of the matter of Moses his History; that gradually proved: First, Moses his knowledge cleared, by his education, and experience, and certain information. His education in the wisdom of Ægypt; what that was. The old Ægyptian learning enquired into; the conveniences for it. Of the Ægyptian Priests. Moses reckoned among them for his knowledge. The Mathematical, Natural, Divine, and Moral learning of Ægypt: their Political wisdom most considerable. The advantage of Moses above the Greek Philosophers, as to wisdom and reason. Moses himself an eye-witness of most of his history: the certain uninterrupted tradition of the other part among the Jews, manifested by rational evidence.*

**H**AVING thus far cleared our way, we come to the third Hypothesis, which is, *There are as manifest proofs of the undoubted truth and certainty of the History recorded by Moses, as any can be given concerning any thing which we yield the firmest assent unto.* Here it must be considered, that we proceed in a way of rational evidence to prove the truth of the thing in hand, as to which, if in the judgment of impartial persons the arguments produced be strong enough to convince an unbiassed mind; It is not material, whether every wrangling *Atheist* will sit down contented with them. For usually persons of that *inclination* rather than *judgment*, are more *resolved* against *light*, than *inquisitive* after it, and rather seek to stop the *chinks* at which any light might come in than open the *windows* for the free and chearful entertainment of it. It will certainly be sufficient to make it appear, that no man can deny the truth of that part of *Scripture* which we are now speaking of, without offering *manifest violence* to his own *faculties*, and making it appear to the world, that he is one wholly forsaken of his own reason: which will be satisfactorily done, if we can clear these things: *First, that it was morally impossible Moses should be ignorant of the things he undertook to write.*

Sect. I.  
Hyp. 3.

write of, and so be deceived himself. Secondly, That it was utterly impossible he should have any design in deceiving others in reporting it. Thirdly, That it is certain from all rational evidence, that he hath not deceived the world, but that his History is undoubtedly true. First, That it was morally impossible Moses should be deceived himself, or be ignorant of the things which he writ of. Two things are requisite to prevent a Man's being deceived himself. First, That he be a person of more than ordinary judgment, wisdom, and knowledge. Secondly, That he have sufficient information concerning the things he undertakes to write of. If either of these two be wanting, it is possible for a man of integrity to be deceived; for an honest heart hath not always an Urim and Thummim upon it; nor is fidelity always furnished with the acutest intellectuals. The simplicity of the Dove is as liable to be deceived its self as the subtilty of the Serpent is to deceive others; but where the wisdom of the Serpent is, to prevent being deceived, and the Doves innocency in not deceiving others, there are all the qualifications can be desired in any one who undertakes only to tell the Truth. First, Then that Moses was a person of a great understanding, and sufficiently qualified to put a difference between truth and falsehood, will appear, first, from the ingenuity of his Education; Secondly, from the ripeness of his judgment, and greatness of his experience when he penned these things.

First, We begin with his Education. And here we require at present no further assent to be given to what is reported concerning Moses in Scripture, than what we give to Plutarch's lives, or any other relations concerning the actions of persons who lived in former Ages. Two things then we find recorded in Scripture concerning Moses his Education; that he was brought up in the Court of Egypt, and that he was skilled in all the learning of the Egyptians; and these two will abundantly prove the ingenuity of his Education, viz. That he was a person both conversant in civil Affairs, and acquainted with the abstruser parts of all the Egyptian wisdom.

And I confess there is nothing to me which doth advance so much the repute of the ancient Egyptian Learning, as that the Spirit of God in Scripture should take so much notice of it, as to set forth a person (otherwise renowned for greater accomplishments) by his skill in this. For if it be below the

*wisdom*

Heb. 11. 25.  
Act 7. 22.

Seet. 2.



wisdom of any ordinary person, to set forth a person by that which in its self is no matter of commendation; how much less can we imagine it of that infinite wisdom which inspired Stephen in that *Apology* which he makes for himself against the *Libertines*, who charged him with contempt of *Moses* and the *Law*? And therefore certainly this was some very observable thing, which was brought in as a singular commendation of *Moses*, by that person whose design was to make it appear how high an esteem he had of him. And hence it appears that *Learning* is not only in its self a great accomplishment of humane nature, but that it ought to be looked upon with veneration, even in those who have excellencies of a higher nature to commend them. If a *Pearl* retains its excellency when it lies upon a *dunghill*, it can certainly lose nothing of its lustre by being set in a *Crown of gold*; if *Learning* be commendable in an *Egyptian*, it is no less in *Moses*, where it is enamelled with more noble perfections, than of it self it can reach unto. All the question is, Whether the ancient learning of the *Egyptians* was such as might be supposed to improve the reason and understanding of men to such an height, as thereby to make them more capable of putting a difference between truth and falshood? Whether it were such an overflowing *Nilus* as would enrich the understandings of all those who were in a capacity to receive its streams? The truth is, there want not grounds of suspicion, that the old *Egyptian Learning* was not of that elevation which the present distance of our Age makes us apt to think it was. And a learned man hath in a set discourse endeavoured to shew the great defects that there were in it: Neither can it, I think, be denied, but according to the reports we have now concerning it, some parts of their *Learning* were frivolous, others obscure, a great deal *Magical*, and the rest short of that improvement, which the accession of the parts and industry of after Ages gave unto it. But yet it is again as evident, that some parts of learning were invented by the *Egyptians*, others much improved, and that the *Greeks* did at first set up with the stock they borrowed out of *Egypt*, and that learning chiefly flourished there, when there was (I had almost said) an *Egyptian darkness* of Ignorance overspreading the face of *Greece* as well as other Nations.

Conringius de  
Hermet. Medic.  
c. 10, 11, 12.

Sect. 3.

Which will appear by these considerations, the great antiquity of their repute for Learning, the great advantages they had for promoting it, and the parts of Learning most in use among them. This though it may seem a digression here, will yet tend to promote our design, by shewing thereby how qualified and accomplished Moses was to deliver to the world an history of ancient times. If we believe Macrobius, there was no people in the world could vie for Learning with the Egyptians, who makes Egypt in one place, the Mother of all Arts, and in another, the Egyptians omnium Philosophiæ disciplinarum parentes, the Fathers of the Philosophick Sciences; he derives elsewhere the original of all Astronomy from them, quos constat primos omnium cælum metiri, & scrutari ausos: though it be more probable that the Nativity even of Astronomy it self was first calculated by the Chaldeans, from whom it was conveyed to the Egyptians. He likewise appropriates all divine knowledge to them, where he saith they were Soli rerum divinarum conscii, and after calls Egypt, divinarum omnium disciplinarum compotem. It is sufficiently notorious what great repute the Egyptian Learning hath been in, with some in our latter times, in that our Chymists look upon it as the greatest honour to their profession, that they think they can claim kindred of the old Egyptian Learning, and derive the pedigree of their Chymistry from the old Egyptian Hermes. But that vain pretence is sufficiently refuted by the fore-mentioned learned man Conringius, in his Tract on this subject, de Hermetica Medicina. Franciscus Patricius professeth himself so great an admirer of the old Egyptian Learning, that he thought it would be no bad exchange, if the Peripatetick Philosophy were extruded, and the old Egyptian received instead of it. But the world is now grown wiser, than to receive his Hermes Trismegistus for the Author of the old Egyptian Philosophy, the credit of his Author being for ever blasted, and the doctrine contained in the Books under his name, manifested to be a meer Cento, a confused mixture of the Christian, Platonick, and Egyptian doctrine together. So that we could hardly maintain the justness of the repute of the ancient Egyptian Learning from any thing now extant of it; but yet we see no reason to question it, especially since it is so honourably spoken of in Sacred Writ, and seems in it to have been

Saturn. l. i. cap.

15. in Sonn

Scip. l. i. c. 19.

cap. 21.

Saturn. l. i. cap.

14. l. 7. c. 13.



been made the *standard and measure* of humane wisdom. For which we have this observable testimony, that when the *wisdom of Solomon* is spoken of with the greatest advantage and commendation, it is set forth with this character, *that it exceeded the wisdom of all the children of the East Country, and all the wisdom of Ægypt.* Whence it is most natural and easie to argue, That certainly their learning must be accounted the greatest at that time in the world; or else it could not have been inferred, that *Solomon was wiser than all men*, because his *wisdom excelled theirs*, unless we suppose their *wisdom* to have been the *greatest* in that age of the world, when the *wisdom of the Græcians* (although in that time *Homer* is supposed to flourish) was not thought worthy the taking notice of. We see from hence then, as from an irrefragable testimony, that the *wisdom of the Egyptians* anciently was no trivial Pedantry, nor meer *superstitious* and *Magical rites*, but that there was something in it *solid and substantial*, or it had not been worth *triumphing* over by the *wisdom of Solomon*: It being true of that, what *Lipsius* saith of the *Roman Empire*, *Quicquid dignum vinci videbatur, vicit; cætera non tam non potuit quam contempsit*; it was an argument of some great worth, that it was overtopped and conquered by it.

1 King. 4. 29.  
30, 31.

*De Magnitud.  
Rom. l. i. c. 3.*

Seç. 4.

Thus we see how just the repute of the ancient *Ægyptian Learning* is from *Testimony*, and we shall find as great reason for it, when we consider the great *advantages* the *Ægyptians* had for promoting of *Learning* among them. Two ways men come to knowledge, either by *tradition* from others, or by *observation* of their own; what the *Ægyptians* had the first way, will be spoken to afterwards; we now consider the latter of these. All *knowledge* arising from *observation*, must be either of those *Sciences* which immediately conduce to the benefit of mens lives, or such whose end is to improve mens *rational faculties* in the knowledge of things. The former necessarily will put men upon the finding out, the latter require *secessum & otia*, freedom from other imployments, a *mind addicted* to them, and *industry* in the study of them, and a *care* to preserve their inventions in them. The study of *Geometry* among the *Ægyptians*, owed its *original* to *necessity*; for the river *Nile* being swelled with the showers falling in *Æthiopia*, and thence annually over-flowing the Country of *Ægypt*, and by its vio-

*Vid Arist. Metaph. l. i. c. i.*

lence overturning all the marks they had to distinguish their lands, made it necessary for them upon every *abatement* of the flood to survey their Lands, to find out every one his own by the quantity of the ground upon the survey. The necessity of which put them upon a more diligent enquiry into that study, that thereby they might attain to some exactness in that, which was to be of such necessary, constant and perpetual use. Thence we find the invention of *Geometry* particularly attributed by *Herodotus*, *Diodorus*, *Strabo* and others, to the *Ægyptians*. This skill of theirs they after improved into a greater benefit, *viz.* the conveying the water of *Nile* into those places where it had not overflowed to so great a height, as to give them hopes of an ensuing plenty; which they did by the artificial cutting of several *Channels* for that end, wherein, saith *Strabo*, the *Ægyptians Art and Industry out-went Nature it self*. By this likewise they observed the height of the over-flowing of the river, whereby they knew what harvest to expect the following year; which they did by a Well near *Memphis* (from the use of it called *Νειλομέτριον*) upon the walls of which were the marks of several cubits, which they observe and publish it to all, that they might provide themselves accordingly. We see what grounds there are, even from profit and advantage, to make us believe that the *Ægyptians* were skilled in *Geometry*, and the knowledge relating thereto.

*Seet. 5.*

And for the promoting of all other knowledge whose end is *Contemplation*, the very *constitution* of their *Commonwealth* did much conduce thereto: For thereby it was provided that there should always be a sufficient number of persons freed from all other *Employments*, who might devote themselves to a sedulous enquiry into the Natures of things. Such were the *Ægyptian Priests*, who by the peculiar nature of the *Ægyptian Superstitions*, were freed from that burdensome service of *sacrificing beasts*, which the Priests of other Nations were continually employed about, and so they enjoyed not only an *ease* but a very *honourable employment*; for they were the persons of the greatest honour, esteem, and authority among the *Ægyptians*, of which rank, as far as I can find, all were accounted, who were not *Souldiers*, *Husbandmen*, or *Artificers*. For *Strabo* mentions no *Nobility* at all in *Ægypt* distinct

*Herod. l. 2.*

*Diod. l. 1.*

*Strab. l. 17.*

*Cæc. Rhodi. l.*

*18. c. 34.*

*Geogr. l. 17.*



distinct from the *Priests*; for he divides the whole *Commonwealth* into *Souldiers*, *Husbandmen* and *Priests*. And telling us that the other two were employed about matters of war, and the King's revenues in peace, he adds, οἱ δὲ ἱερεῖς καὶ φιλοσοφίαν ἥσαν καὶ ἀστρονομίαν, διμαρτυρεῖν τε τοῖς βασιλέων ἥσαν, *The Priests minded the study of Philosophy and Astronomy, and conversed most with their Kings*: And after, speaking of their Kings being studied in their arts as well as others of the *Priests*, he adds, μεθ' ὧν ὡς αὐτοῖς πλείων ὁ βίος, *with whom they spent most of their lives*. Agreeable to this, *Plutarch* tells us, that the Kings themselves were often *Priests*; and adds, out of *Hecataeus*, that the Kings used to drink wine by measure, ἱερεῖς ὄντες, *because they were Priests*; for, as he saith, the Kings of *Egypt* were always chosen, either out of the rank of *Priests* or *Souldiers*, τὰ μὲν δὲ ἀνδρείαν, τὰ δὲ διὰ σοφίαν ἥους ἀξίωμα καὶ πμῶ ἐχρύντο· *those two orders being of the greatest honour, the one for valour, and the other for wisdom*; and if the King were chosen out of the *Souldiers*, he was presently entred among the *Priests*, to learn their mystical Sciences. *Diodorus* indeed seems to reckon some great persons after the *Priests*, and distinct from the *Souldiery*; but if he means by these any other than some of the chief of the other two professions, I must say, as *Casaubon* doth in another case of *Diodorus*, *Sane Strabonis auctoritas multis saeculis apud me praevalet*. *Diodorus* his testimony is not to be weighed with *Strabo's*. From hence we may understand the reason why that *Potipherah*, whose daughter *Joseph* married, is called כהן, which some render the *Priest*, others the *Prince of On*; but these two we see are very consistent, their *Priests* being their great *Princes*; and *Heliopolis*, or *On*, of which *Potipherah* was *Prince* or *Priest*, being the chief Seat and University of the *Priests* of *Egypt*. Now it is evident from *Clemens Alexandrinus*, that the *Egyptians* did not communicate their mysteries promiscuously to all, but only to such as were in succession to the *Crown*, or else to those of the *Priests* and their Children, who were most apt and fit for them, both by their diet, instruction, and family. For this was unalterably observed among them, that there was a continued succession of a profession in their several families, both of *Priests*, *Souldiers*, and *Husbandmen*, whereby they kept their several orders without any mixture or confusion, which

*De Isid. & Ofr.*

*Lib. 1.*

*Not. in Strab. l. 17.*

*Gen. 41. 45.*

*Strom. l. 5.*

is

Herod. l. 1.  
Diod. l. 1. c. 71.

L. 1. c. App.

is confessed both by *Herodotus* and *Diodorus*: So that by this constitution *Learning* was among them confined to the *Priests*, which highly advanceth the probability of that *tradition*, preserved among the *Egyptians* concerning *Moses* (which likewise strongly proves our present design) viz. *Manetho's Records*, as *Josephus* tells us, that *Moses* was one of the *Priests* at *Heliopolis*, and that his name among them was *Osarsiphus*, who changing his name, was called *Moses*; and in the time of *Amenophis* conducted the leprous people out of *Egypt* (so the *Egyptians* out of their hatred of the *Israelites* call them.) And *Chæremôn*, another *Egyptian Priest* in the same Author, calls *Moses* a *Scribe*, and *Joseph* (by whom probably he means *Josbua*) a *sacred Scribe*, and saith, that the *Egyptian* name of *Moses* was *Tisithen*, and of *Joseph*, *Poteseph*. Now this tradition did in all probability arise from the repute of *Moses* his *learning* and *wisdom*; which being among them proper to their *Priests*, they thence ascribed that name to him, although probably he might come to the *knowledge* of all their *mysteries*, from the *relation* he had to *Pharaoh's* daughter.

SECT. 6.

De vita Mosi.

Bibliothec. l. 2.  
p. 39.

Iambl. de vit.  
Pyth. l. 1. 29.  
De vit. Pyth.  
p. 182.

Geogr. l. 17.

We come now to consider the *parts* of the *Egyptian learning*, in which the *Scripture* tells us *Moses* was killed: This by *Philo Judæus* is branched into *Arithmetick*, *Geometry*, *Musick*, and *Hieroglyphical Philosophy*: But *Sixtus Senensis* more comprehensively from *Diodorus*, *Diogenes Laertius*, and others, divides it into *four parts*, *Mathematical*, *Natural*, *Divine* and *Moral*. Their skill in the *Mathematical* parts of *Learning* hath been partly shewed already, and might be more largely from that skill in them, which the *Græcians* gained from the *Egyptians*, as both *Iamblicus* and *Porphyrie* speak of *Pythagoras*, that he gained his skill in *Geometry* chiefly from the *Egyptians*: For these, as *Porphyrie* saith, of a long time had been very studious of *Geometry*, as the *Phœnicians* of *Arithmetick*, and the *Chaldaans* of *Astronomy*. But *Iamblicus* (and I think deservedly) takes notice of the τὸ δύσπεστον ἐκείνῳ, the difficult access of the *Egyptian Priests*, especially as to acquaintance with their *mysteries*; and so *Strabo* calls them, πολλοὶς καὶ δύσπεστον ὄντας, such who concealed their *learning* under many symbols, and were not easily drawn to unfold it. And yet we might think the two and twenty years time which *Pythagoras* is thought to have spent among them, had been enough

to



to have insinuated himself into their utmost acquaintance, and to have drawn from them the knowledge of their greatest mysteries; but yet we have no great reason to think he did, if we believe the story in *Diogenes Laertius* of his sacrificing an *Hecatomb* for the finding out of that demonstration, which is now contained in the 47. proposition of the first of *Euclide*. Yet this did not abate the *Græcians* esteem of the *Egyptians Mathematical Learning*; for in *Plato's* time, *Eudoxus Cnidius* went into *Egypt* on purpose to acquire it there; and *Democritus* his boast, that none of the *Arsepedonaptæ* in *Egypt* (so their Priests were called, as *Clemens Alexandrinus* and *Eusebius* tell us, who relate the story) exceeded him in the *Mathematics*, by which it may be at least inferred, that they were then in greatest esteem for them. Their great skill in *Astronomy* is attested by *Diodorus*, *Strabo*, *Herodotus*, and others, and by their finding out the course of the year by the motion of the *Sun*, which was the invention of the *Heliopolitan Priests*. How much they valued *Geography*, appears from *Clemens* his description of the *ιεργεσιμαδωσις*, or sacred Scribe in the solemn procession; for he was required to be skilled in *Hieroglyphicks*, *Cosmography*, *Geography*, the motions of the Planets, the *Chorography* of *Egypt*, and description of the Nile. *Eustathius* in his Notes on *Dionysius*, attributes the invention of *Geographical Tables* to *Sesoftris*, who caused the Lands he had conquered to be described in Tables, and so communicated to the *Egyptians*, and from them to others. Their skill in *natural Philosophy* could not be very great, because of their *Magick* and *Superstition*, whereby they were hindered from all experiments in those natural things which they attributed a *Divinity* to; but they seem to have been more exact and curious in *natural history*; for, any prodigies, or any thing that was anomalous in nature, they did, saith *Strabo*, *φιλαπερυσμώσεσιν ἀναφέρεν εἰς τὰ ἱερὰ γεσιμαδία*, with a great deal of curiosity insert it in their sacred records, and *Herodotus* adds, that more things of that nature are observed by them than by any other Nation; which, saith he, they not only diligently preserve, but frequently compare together, and from a similitude of prodigies gather a similitude of events. But that which gained the *Egyptians* the greatest repute abroad, seems to have been their early skill in *Physick*, which is so much spoken of by *Homer*;

*Plato*,

*Clem. Strom. l. 1.*  
*Euseb. Præpar.*  
*l. 10. c. 2.*

*Diod. l. 1. c. 49,*  
*50. Strab. l. 17.*

*Herod. l. 2.*

*Strom. l. 6.*  
*p. 631. ed. Pmr.*

Nat. hist. l. 19.  
c. 5. l. 29. c. 1.

Plato, Herodotus, Plutarch, Diogenes Laertius, and others, that it were impertinent troubling a Reader's patience with the proof of that which is so generally confessed. A great evidence of the antiquity of this study among them is (if *Manetho* may be so far credited) that *Athothis*, the second King of the first Dynasty of the *Thinites*, was a Physician himself, and writ some Books of *Anatomy*; and the second King of the third Dynasty of the *Memphites*, was, for his skill in *Physick*, honoured among them by the name of *Æsculapius*. *Pliny* affirms it to have been the custom of their Kings to cause dead bodies to be dissected, to find out the nature of diseases; and elsewhere tells us, that the original of *Physick* among them was from the relations of those who by any remedy were cured of any disease, which for a memorial to posterity were recorded in their Temples. Their hieroglyphical and mystical Learning hath made the greatest noise in the world, and hath the least of substance in it; which whoever will not be convinced of without perusal of *Kircher's Oedipus Ægyptiacus*, will at last find it fully done to his hand by the successful endeavours of that otherwise learned man. I cannot think any rational man could think that study worth his pains, which at the highest can amount but to a conjecture; and when it is come to that with a great deal of pains, it is nothing but some ordinary and trivial observation. As in that famous Hieroglyphick of *Diospolis*, so much spoken of by the Ancients, where was a Child to express coming into the world, an old man for going out of it, an Hawk for God, an Hippopotamus for hatred, and a Crocodile for impudence, and all to express this venerable *Apotheism*, O ye that come into the world, and that go out of it, God hates impudence. And therefore certainly this kind of Learning deserves the highest form among the *difficiles Nugæ*; and all these Hieroglyphicks put together, will make but one good one, and that should be for Labour lost.

Seet. 7.

There is yet one part of Learning more among them, which the Egyptians are esteemed for, which is the Political and civil part of it, which may better be called wisdom than most of the fore-going; two things speak much the wisdom of a Nation, good Laws, and a prudent management of them: their Laws are highly commended by *Strabo* and *Diodorus*; and it is none of the least commendations of them, that *Solon* and



and *Lycurgus* borrowed so many of their constitutions from them ; and for the prudent management of their government, as the continuance of their *state* so long in peace and quietness, is an invincible demonstration of it ; so the report given of them in *Scripture* adds a further *testimony* to it ; for therein the King of *Ægypt* is called the *Son of the Wise*, as well as the *Son of ancient Kings* ; and his *Counsellors* are called *wise Counsellors of Pharaoh*, and the *wise men* ; whereby a more than ordinary prudence and policy must be understood. Can we now imagine such a person as *Moses* was, bred up in all the *ingenuous literature* of *Ægypt*, conversant among their *wisest persons* in *Pharaoh's Court*, having thereby all advantages to improve himself, and to understand the utmost of all that they knew, should not be able to pass a judgment between a mere *pretence* and *imposture*, and *real* and *important Truths* ? Can we think that one who had *interest* in so great a *Court*, all *advantages* of *raising himself* therein, should willingly forsake all the *pleasures* and *delights* at *present*, all his *hopes* and *advantages*, for the *future*, were he not fully persuaded of the certain and undoubted truth of all those things which are recorded in his books ? Is it possible a man of *ordinary wisdom* should venture himself upon so hazardous, unlikely and dangerous employment, as that was *Moses* undertook, which could have no *probability* of *success*, but only upon the *belief* that that *God* who appeared unto him, was greater than all the *Gods* of *Ægypt*, and could carry on his own design by his own power, maugre all the opposition which the *Princes* of the *world* could make against it ? And what possible ground can we have to think that such a person who did verily believe the truth of what *God* revealed unto him, should dare to write any otherwise than as it was revealed unto him ? If there had been any thing repugnant to *common reason* in the *history* of the *Creation*, the *fall of man*, the *universal deluge*, the *propagation of the world by the sons of Noah*, the *history of the Patriarchs*, had not *Moses* *rational faculties* as well as we ? nay, had he them not far better improved than any of *ours* are ? and was not he then able to judge what was *suitable* to *reason*, and what not ? and can we think he would then deliver any thing *inconsistent* with *reason* or *undoubted tradition* then, when the *Ægyptian Priests* might so readily and plainly have *triumphed* over him, by dis-

covering the falshood of what he wrote ? Thus we see that *Moses* was as highly qualified as any of the acutest *Heathen Philosophers* could be, for *discerning truth* from *falsehood*; nay, in all probability he far excelled the most renowned of the *Græcian Philosophers* in that very kind of learning wherewith they made so great noise in the world, which was originally *Ægyptian*, as is evident in the whole *series* of the *Græcian Philosophers*, who went age after age to *Ægypt*, to get some scraps of that learning there, which *Moses* could not have but full meals of, because of his high place, great interest, and power in *Ægypt*. And must those hungry *Philosophers* then become the only *Masters* of our *reason*, and their *dictates* be received as the *sense* and *voice* of *nature*, which they either received from *uncertain tradition*, or else delivered in *opposition* to it, that they might be more taken notice of in the world ? Must an *αὐτὸς ἔφα* be confronted with, *Thus saith the Lord* ? and a few pitifull symbols vye authority with *divine commands* ? and *Ex nihilo nihil fit* be sooner believed than, *In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth* ? What irrefragable evidence of reason is that so confident a *presumption* built upon, when it can signifie nothing without this *hypothesis*, That there is nothing but *matter* in the world ? and let this first be proved, and we will never stick to grant the other. I may confidently say, the great gullery of the world hath been, taking *philosophical dictates* for the *standard of reason*, and *unproved hypotheses* for certain *foundations* for our *discourse* to rely upon. And the seeking to reconcile the *mysteries* of our faith to these, hath been that which hath almost destroyed it, and turned our Religion into a mere *philosophical speculation*. But of this elsewhere. We see then that insisting merely on the *accomplishment* and *rational perfections* of the persons who speak, we have more reason to yield credit to *Moses* in his *history*, than to any *Philosophers* in their *speculations*.

Sect. 8.

And that which in the next place speaks *Moses* to be a person of wisdom, and judgment, and ability to find out truth, was his age and experience when he delivered these things to the world. He vented no crude and indigested conceptions, no sudden and temerarious fancies, the usual issues of teeming and juvenile wits; he lived long enough to have experience to try, and judgment to distinguish a mere outside and varnish, from what

was



was solid and substantial. We cannot then have the least ground of suspicion, that *Moses* was any ways unfit to discern truth from falshood, and therefore was capable of judging the one from the other.

But though persons be never so highly accomplisht for *parts, learning, and experience*, yet if they want *due information* of the certainty of the things they deliver, they may be still *deceived themselves*; and if they preserve it for posterity, be guilty of *deceiving others*. Let us now therefore see whether *Moses* had not as great *advantages* for understanding the truth of his *History*, as he had *judgment* to discern it. And concerning all those things contained in the *four last books* of his, to his own death, it was *impossible* any should have greater than himself, writing nothing but what he was *pars magna* himself of, what he *saw*, and *heard*, and *did*; and can any testimony be desired greater than his whose actions they were, or who was present at the doing of them, and that not in any *private way*; but in the most *publick capacity*? For although private persons may be present at great actions, yet they may be guilty of mis-representing them, for want of understanding all circumstances *precedent*, and *subsequent*, or for want of understanding the *designs* of the chief *instruments* of action: but when the *person* himself, who was the *chief* in all, shall undertake to write an exact *History* of it, what evidence can be desired more certain than that is, that there could be no defect as to information concerning what was done? The only scruple then that can be made, must be concerning the *passages* of former times which *Moses* relates. And here I doubt not but to make it appear, that insisting only on all that can be desired in a *bare Historian* (setting aside *Divine revelation*) he had as *true* and *certain information* of the *History* of those former ages, as any one can have of things at that distance from themselves; and that is, by a *certain uninterrupted tradition* of them, which will appear more clear and evident in that Nation of which *Moses* was, than in any other Nation in the world: And that on these *two accounts*: first, *The undoubted lineal descent from Father to Son in the Jewish Nation*. Secondly, *Their interest lying so much in the preserving this tradition entire.*

First, That there ~~was~~ *was* a certain unmixed lineal descent from

Sect. 9.

*Father to Son in the Jewish Nation* : the great cause of most of the confusion in the tradition of other Nations, was the frequent mixing of several families one with another ; now that God might as it were on purpose satisfy the world of the *Israelites* capacity to preserve the tradition entire, he prohibited their mixture by marriages with the people of other Nations and families. So that in *Moses* his time it was a very easie matter to run up their lineal descent as far as the flood, nay, up to *Adam* ; for *Adam* conversed sometime with *Lamech*, *Noah's* Father ; for *Lamech* was born *A. M.* 874. *Adam* died 930. so that 56 years, according to that computation, were *Adam* and *Lamech* co-temporary. Can we then think *Noah* ignorant of the ancient tradition of the world when his Father was so long co-ævous with *Adam* ; and *Mathuselah* his Grandfather, who was born *A. M.* 687. died not till *A. M.* 1656. according to our most learned *Primate of Armagh*, i. e. was 600 years co-temporary with *Noah*. *Sem* his Son was probably living in some part of *Jacob's* time, or *Isaac's* at least ; and how easily and uninterruptedly might the general tradition of the ancient History be continued thence to the time of *Moses*, when the number of families agreeing in this tradition was increased, and withall incorporated by a common ligament of Religion ? I demand then, where can we suppose any ignorance or cutting off this general tradition in so continued a succession as here was ? Can we imagine that the Grand-children of *Jacob* could be ignorant of their own pedigree, and whence they came into *Ægypt* ? can we think a thing so late and so remarkable as the account of their coming thither, should be forgotten, which was attended with so many memorable circumstances, especially the selling and advancement of *Joseph*, whose memory it was impossible should be obliterated in so short a time ? Could *Jacob* be ignorant of the Country whence his Grandfather *Abraham* came ? especially when he lived so long in it himself, and married into that branch of the family that was remaining there, when he had served his Uncle *Laban* ? Could *Abraham*, when he was co-temporary with *Sem*, be ignorant of the truth of the flood, when *Sem*, from whom he derived himself, was one of the persons who escaped it in the *Ark* ? Could *Sem* be ignorant of the actions before the flood, when *Adam*, the first man, lived so near the time of *Noah* ? and, Could *Noah* then be ignorant



rant of the *Creation* and the *Fall of man*? Thus we see it almost *impossible*, that any age among them then could be ignorant of the passages of the *precedent*, which they were so few *Generations* removed from, that they could with ease derive themselves from the *first man*. What then can we say? that any of these had a design of *deceiving* their posterity, and so corrupted the tradition? but besides, that it could be hardly *possible* at that time, when there were so many remaining *testimonies* of former times; what *end* can we imagine that any Parents should have in thus *deceiving* their *Children* or what advantage should come to them by such a deceit? Nay, I shall now manifest in the *second place*, that the whole interest of their children lay in preserving this tradition certain and entire. For their hopes of possessing *Canaan* and title to it, depended upon the promise made to *Abraham* 400 years before; which would not only keep awake their sense of *Divine Providence*, but would make them careful during their bondage to preserve their *Genealogies*, because all the right they could plead to their possessions in *Canaan*, was from their being of *Abraham's seed*. And besides this, on purpose to be a memorial to them of passages between God and *Abraham*, they had in their flesh a badge of *circumcision*, which would serve to call to mind those transactions which had been between God and their fore-fathers. These things then do fully demonstrate, that insisting onely on rational evidence, the *Israelites* were the most certain conservators of the ancient History of the world; and can we then think, that *Moses* who was the Ruler among them, should not fully understand those things which every *Israelite* could scarce be ignorant of, and might correct the mistakes of *Moses* in his History, if he had been guilty of any such? These things I suppose have made the first proposition evident, That it was morally impossible *Moses* should be deceived himself, or be ignorant of the things which he reports to others both because he had abilities sufficient to discover truth from falsehood, and sufficient information of the passages of former times.

## C H A P. III.

*Moses his fidelity and integrity proved.*

*Moses considered as an Historian, and as a Law-giver ; his fidelity in both proved ; clear evidences that he had no intent to deceive in his History, freedom from private interest, impartiality in his relations, plainness and perspicuity of stile. As a Law-giver, he came armed with Divine Authority, which being the main thing, is fixed on to be fully proved from his actions and writings. The power of miracles the great evidence of Divine revelation. Two grand questions propounded. In what cases miracles may be expected, and how known to be true. No necessity of a constant power of miracles in a Church : Two cases alone wherein they may be expected. When any thing comes as a Law from God, and when a Divine Law is to be repealed. The necessity of miracles in those cases as an evidence of Divine revelation asserted. Objections answered. No use of miracles when the doctrine is settled and owned by miracles in the first revelation. No need of miracles in reformation of a Church.*

Seçt. 1.

**T**HE second proposition contains the proof of *Moses* his fidelity, that he was as far from having any intent to deceive others, as he was being deceived himself. Two ways *Moses* must be considered, as an *Historian*, and as a *Lawgiver*; the only inducement for him to deceive as an *Historian*, must be some particular interest which must draw him aside from an impartial delivery of the truth; as a *Law-giver* he might deceive, if he pretended *Divine revelation* for those *Laws* which were only the issues of his own brain, that they might be received with a greater veneration among the people, as *Numa Pompilius* and others did. Now if we prove that *Moses* had no interest to deceive in his *History*, and had all rational evidence of *Divine revelation* in his *Laws*, we shall abundantly evince the undoubted fidelity of *Moses* in every thing recorded by him. We begin then with his fidelity as an *Historian*; and it being contrary to the common interest of the world to deceive and be deceived, we have no reason to entertain any suspicions



ons of the *veracity* of any person where we cannot discern some *peculiar interest* that might have a stronger *bias* upon him than the *common interest* of the world. For it is otherwise in *morals* than in *naturals*; for in *naturals*, we see that every thing will leave its *proper interest* to preserve the *common interest* of nature; but in *morals*, there is nothing more common than *deserting* the *common interest* of mankind, to set up a *peculiar interest* against it: It being the truest description of a *Politician*, that he is one who makes himself the *centre*, and the *whole world* his *circumference*; that he regards not how much the whole world is abused, if any advantage doth accrue to himself by it. Where we see it then the design of any person to *advance himself* or his posterity, or to set up the *credit* of the *Nation* whose *History* he writes, we may have just cause to suspect his *partiality*, because we then find a sufficient inducement for such a one to leave the common road of truth, and to fall into the *paths* of deceit. But we have not the least ground to suspect any such *partiality* in the *History* of *Moses*; for nothing is more clear than that he was free from the *ambitious design* of *advancing himself* and his posterity, who notwithstanding the great honour he enjoyed himself, was content to leave his posterity in the meanest sort of *attendance* upon the *Tabernacle*. And as little have we ground to think he intended to *flatter* that *Nation*, which he so lively describes, that one would think he had rather a design to set forth the *frowardness*, *unbelief*, *unthankfulness*, and *disobedience* of a *Nation* towards a *Gracious God*, than any ways to *inbance* their *reputation* in the world, or to ingratiate himself with them by writing this *History* of them Nay, and he sets forth so exactly the *lesser failings* and *grosser enormities* of all the *Ancestours* of this *Nation* whose acts he records, that any impartial Reader will soon acquit him of a design of *flattery*, when after he hath recorded those *faults*, he seeks not to *extenuate* them, or bring any *excuse* or pretence to *palliate* them. So that any observing reader may easily take notice, that he was carried on by a higher design than the *common people* of *Historians* are; and that his drift and scope was to *exalt* the *goodness* and *favour* of *God*, towards a *rebellious* and *obstinate people*. Of which there can be no greater nor more lively *demonstration*, than the *History* of all the *transactions* of  
the

the *Jewish Nation*, from their coming forth of *Ægypt* to their utter *ruine* and *desolation*. And *Moses* tells them as  
 Deut. 7. 7, 8. from God himself, *it was neither for their number, nor their goodness, that God set his Love upon them, but he loved them, because he loved them; i. e.* no other account was to be given of his gracious dealing with them, but the *freeness* of his own bounty, and the *exuberancy* of his *goodness* towards them. Nay, have we not cause to admire the *ingenuity* as well as *veracity* of this excellent *personage*, who not only lays so notorious a blot upon the stock of his own Family *Levi*, recording so punctually the inhumanity and cruelty of him, and *Siméon* in their dealings with the *Sechemites*; but likewise inserts that curse which was left upon their *memory* for it, by their own *Father* at his decease! And that he might not leave the least *suspicion* of *partiality* behind him, he hath not done as the *statuary* did, (who engraved his own name so artificially in the statue of *Jupiter*, that one should continue as long as the other. (but what the other intended for the praise of his skill, *Moses* hath done for his *ingenuity*, that he hath so interwoven the *History* of his own *failings* and *disobedience* with those of the Nation, that his *spots* are like to continue as long as the whole *web* of his *History* is like to do. Had it been the least part of his design to have his memory preserved with a *superstitious veneration* among the *Jews*, how easie had it been for him to have left out any thing that might in the least *entrench* upon his reputation? but we find him very *secure* and *careless* in that particular; nay, on the other side, very *studious* and *industrious* in depressing the honour and *deserts* of men and advancing the power and *goodness* of God. And all this he doth, not in an affected *strain* of *Rhetorick*, whose proper work is *impetrare fidem mendacio*, and as *Tully* somewhere confesseth, *to make things seem otherwise than they are*, but with that *innate simplicity* and *plainness*, and yet *wichal* with that *Imperatoria brevitás*, that *Majesty* and *Authority*, that it is thereby evident he sought not to *court acceptance*, but to *demand belief*: Nor had any such pitiful design of pleasing his Readers with some *affected phrases*, but thought that *Truth* it self had *presence* enough with it, to *command the submission* of our *understandings* to it.

Especially



Especially when all these were delivered by such a one who came sufficiently armed with all *motives of credibility and inducements to assent*, by that *evidence* which he gave, that he was no *pretender to divine revelation*, but was *really* employed as a *peculiar instrument of State* under the *God and Ruler of the whole world*. Which if it be made clear, than all our further doubts must presently cease, and all impertinent disputes be silenced, when the *supream Majesty* appears *impowering* any person to *dictate* to the world the *Laws* they must be governed by. For if any thing be repugnant to our *rational faculties*, that is, that *God* should *dictate* any thing but what is most *certainly true*, or that the *Governour of the world* should *prescribe* any *Laws*, but such as were most *just and reasonable*. If we suppose a *God*, we cannot question *veracity* to be one of his chiefest *Attributes*, and that it is *impossible* the *God of truth* should employ any, to *reveal* any thing as from him, but what was *undoubtedly true*. So that it were an argument of the most gross and unreasonable *incredulity*, to *distrust* the *certainty* of any thing which comes to us with sufficient *evidence of divine revelation*, because thereby we shew our *distrust* of the *veracity of God himself*. All that we can desire then, is only *reasonable satisfaction* concerning the evidence of *Divine revelation* in the person whose words we are to credit, and this our *Gracious God* hath been so far from denying men, that he hath given all *rational evidence* of the truth of it. For it implying no *incongruity* at all, to any *notions of God or our selves*, that *God* should, when it pleases him, single out some *instrument* to manifest his will to the world; our enquiry then leads us to *those things* which may be proper *notes and characters* of such a person who is employed on so high an *Embassy*. And those are chiefly these two, *if his actions be such as could not flow from the power of meer natural causes*; and *if the things he reveals be such as could not proceed from any created understanding*. First then, *for his actions*, these striking most upon our *outward senses*, when they are any thing *extraordinary*, do *transmit* along with the *impressions* of them to the *understanding*, an *high opinion* of the *person* that does them: Whereas the mere *height of knowledge*, or *profoundness* of things discovered, can have no such present *power and influence* upon any, but such as are of more *raised and inquisitive minds*. And the world

is generally more apt to suspect its self deceived with *words*, than it can be with *actions*; and hence *Miracles*, or the doing of things above the reach of nature, hath been always embraced as the greatest testimony of *Divine authority* and *revelation*. For which there is this evident reason, That the course of nature being settled by divine power, and every thing acting there by the force of that power it received at first, it seems *impossible* that any thing should really alter the *series* of things, without the same power which at first produced them. This then we take for granted, *that where-ever such a power appears, there is a certain evidence of a Divine presence going along with such a person who enjoys it.* And this is that which is most evident in the *actions* of *Moses*, both as to the *Miracles* he wrought both in *Agypt* and the *Wilderness*, and his *miraculous deliverance* of the *Israelites* out of *Agypt*, this latter being as much above the reach of any merely *civil power*, as the other above *natural*.

Sect. 3.

We therefore come to the *rational evidence* of that *divine authority* whereby *Moses* acted, which may be gathered from that *divine power* which appeared in *his actions*; which being a matter of so great weight and importance (it being one of the main *bases* whereon the *evidence* of *divine revelation*, as to us, doth stand) and withal of so great *difficulty* and *obscurity*, (caused through the preferring some parties in Religion, above the common interest of it) it will require more care and diligence to search what *influence the power of Miracles* hath upon the *proving* the *Divine Commission* of those who do them. Whether they are such undoubted *credentials*, that where-ever they are produced, we are presently to receive the *persons* who bring them, as extraordinary *Embassadors* from heaven, employed on some peculiar *message* to the *sons of men*? For the full stating of this *important question*, two things must be cleared; First, *In what cases miracles may be expected as credentials to confirm an immediate commission from Heaven?* Secondly, *What rational evidences do attend those miracles, to assure us they are such as they pretend to be?*

I.

First, For the cases wherein these miracles are to be expected as inducements to, or confirmations of our faith, concerning the *Divine* employment of any persons in the world. And here I lay down this as a certain Foundation, That a power of miracles is not constantly



constantly and perpetually necessary in all those who manage the affairs of Heaven here on earth, or that act in the name of God in the world. When the doctrine of faith is once settled in sacred records, and the divine revelation of that doctrine sufficiently attested, by a power of miracles in the revealers of it, What imaginable necessity or pretext can there be contrived for a power of miracles, especially among such as already own the Divine revelation of the Scriptures? To make then a power of working miracles to be constantly resident in the Church of God, as one of the necessary notes and characters of it, is to put God upon that necessity which common nature is freed from, viz. of multiplying things without sufficient cause to be given for them; and to leave mens faith at a stand, when God hath given sufficient testimony for it to rely upon. It is a thing too common and easie to be observed, that some persons out of their eagerness to uphold the interest of their own party, have been fain to establish it upon such grounds, which when they are sufficiently searched to the bottom, do apparently undermine the common and sure Foundations whereon the belief of our common Christianity doth mainly stand. It were easie to make a large discourse on this subject, whereby we may rip open the wounds that Christianity hath received, through the contentions of the several parties of it; but this imputation cannot with so much reason be fastned on any party, as that which is nailed to a pretended infallible chair; for which we need no other instance, than this before us. For while the leaders of that party make a power of miracles to be a necessary note of the true Church, they unavoidably run men upon this dangerous precipice, not to believe any thing as a matter of faith, where they find not sufficient miracles to convince them that is the true Church which propounds it to them. Which necessarily follows from their acknowledged principles; for it being impossible, according to them, to believe any thing with a divine faith, but what is propounded by the Church as an infallible guide; and it being impossible to know which is this infallible guide, but by the notes and characters of it, and one of those notes, being a power of miracles, I cannot find out my guide but by this power; and this power must be present in the Church, (for nothing of former ages concerning faith, as the Miracles of Christ,

his *resurrection*, &c. is to be believed, but on the Church's account) and therefore where men do not find sufficient *conviction* from *present miracles*, to believe the *Church* to be an infallible guide, they must throw off all faith concerning the *Gospel*; for as good never a whit, as never the better. And therefore it is no wonder *Atheism* should be so *thriving* a plant in *Italy*; nay under, if not within the walls of *Rome* it self, where inquisitive persons do daily see the *jugglings* and *impostures* of *Priests* in their pretended miracles, and from thence arebrought to look upon Religion its self as a mere imposture, and to think no *Pope* so infallible as he that said, *Quantum nobis profuit hæc de Christo fabula?* Such horrid consequences do men drive others, if not bring themselves, to, when they employ their parts and industry rather to uphold a *corrupt interest*, than to promote the belief of the acknowledged principles of Christian faith. But as long as we assert no *necessity* of such a *power* of miracles to be the *note* of any true Church, nor any such *necessity* of an *infallible guide*, but that the *miracles* wrought by *Christ* and his *Apostles*, were sufficient evidences of a *divine spirit* in them; and that the *Scriptures* were recorded by them to be an *infallible rule* of faith, here we have more clear reason as to the primary *motives* and *grounds* of faith, and withal the *infallible veracity* of *God* in the *Scriptures*, as the last *resolution* of faith. And while we assert such an *infallible rule* of faith, delivered to us by such an unanimous consent from the first delivery of it, and then so fully *attested* by such *uncontrollable miracles*, we cannot in the least understand to what end a power of miracles should now serve in the *Church*, especially among those who all believe the *Scriptures* to be the *word* of *God*. Indeed before the great *harvest* of *Converts* in the *primitive times* were brought in, both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and the *Church* fully settled in receiving the *Canon* of the *Scriptures* universally, we find *God* did continue this power among them; but after the *Books* of the *New Testament* were generally embraced as the rule of faith among *Christians*, we find them so far from pretending to any such power, that they reject the pretenders to it, such as the *Donatists* were, and plead upon the same accounts as we do now against the *necessity* of it. We see then no reason in the world for *miracles* to be continued where the doctrine of faith



is settled, as being confirmed by *miracles* in the first Preachers of it.

*Sect. 4.*

There are only these *two* cases then, wherein *miracles* may justly and with reason be expected. First, *When any person comes as by an extraordinary commission from God to the world, either to deliver some peculiar message, or to doe some more than ordinary service.* Secondly, *When something that hath been before established by Divine Law, is to be repealed, and some other way of worship established instead of it.* First, *When any comes upon an extraordinary message to the world, in the name of, and by commission from God,* then it is but reason to require some more than ordinary evidence of such authority. Because of the main importance of the duty of giving credit to such a person, and the great sin of being guilty of rejecting that divine authority which appears in him. And in this case we cannot think that God would require it as a *duty* to believe, where he doth not give sufficient *arguments* for *faith*, nor that he will punish persons for such a fault, which an *invincible ignorance* was the cause of. Indeed God doth not use to *necessitate* faith, as to the act of it, but he doth so clearly *propound* the *object* of it, with all arguments inducing to it, as may sufficiently justify a *Believer's choice* in point of *reason* and *prudence*, and may leave all Unbelievers without excuse. I cannot see what account a man can give to himself of his faith, much less what *Apology* he can make to others for it, unless he be sufficiently convinced in point of the *highest reason*, that it was his *duty* to believe; and in order to that *conviction*, there must be some clear evidence given, That what is spoken hath the *impress* of *Divine authority* upon it. Now what convictions there can be to any sober mind concerning *Divine authority* in any person without such a *power* of *miracles* going along with him, when he is to deliver some *new doctrine* to the world to be believed, I confess I cannot understand. For although I doubt not but where-ever God doth *reveal* any thing to any person immediately, he gives *demonstrable evidence* to the inward *senses* of the soul, that it comes from himself; yet this *inward sense* can be no ground to another person to believe his *doctrine divine*, because no man can be a *competent judge* of the *actings* of another's *senses*; and it is impossible to another person to distinguish the *actings* of the *divine Spirit* from strong *impressions* of *fancy* by the force  
and

Object.

and energy of them. If it be said, *That we are bound to believe those, who say they are fully satisfied of their Divine Commission.*

Answ. 1.

I answer *First*, this will expose us to all *delusions* imaginable; for if we are bound to believe them *because* they say so, we are bound to believe *all* which say so; and none are more confident pretenders to this than the greatest deceivers, as the experience of our age will sufficiently witness. *Secondly*, Men must necessarily be bound to believe *contradictions*; for nothing is more ordinary, than for such confident *pretenders* to a *Divine Spirit*, to *contradict* one another, and it may be, the same person in a little time *contradict* himself: and must we still be bound to believe all they say? If so, no *Philosophers* would be so much in request, as those *Aristotle* disputes against in his *Metaphysics*, who thought a thing might be, and not be, at the same time. *Thirdly*, The ground of faith at last will be but a mere *humane testimony*, as far as the person who is to believe is capable of judging of it. For the *Question* being, Whether the person I am to believe hath *divine authority* for what he saith, What ground can I have to believe that he hath so? Must I take his *bare affirmation* for it? If so, then a mere *humane testimony* must be the ground of *divine faith*, and that which it is last resolved into; if it be said, *That I am to believe the divine authority by which he speaks, when he speaks in the name of God*: I answer, the *question* will again return, how I shall know he speaks this from *divine authority*? and so there must be a progress in *infinitum*, or founding *divine faith* on a mere *humane testimony*, if I am to believe *divine revelation* merely on the account of the person's affirmation who pretends unto it. For in this case it holds good, *non apparentis & non existentis eadem est ratio*; if he be divinely inspired, and there be no ground inducing me to believe that he is so, I shall be excused, if I believe him not, if my wilfulness and laziness be not the cause of my unbelief.

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3. but a mere *humane testimony*, as far as the person who is to believe is capable of judging of it. For the *Question* being, Whether the person I am to believe hath *divine authority* for what he saith, What ground can I have to believe that he hath so? Must I take his *bare affirmation* for it? If so, then a mere *humane testimony* must be the ground of *divine faith*, and that which it is last resolved into; if it be said, *That I am to believe the divine authority by which he speaks, when he speaks in the name of God*: I answer, the *question* will again return, how I shall know he speaks this from *divine authority*? and so there must be a progress in *infinitum*, or founding *divine faith* on a mere *humane testimony*, if I am to believe *divine revelation* merely on the account of the person's affirmation who pretends unto it. For in this case it holds good, *non apparentis & non existentis eadem est ratio*; if he be divinely inspired, and there be no ground inducing me to believe that he is so, I shall be excused, if I believe him not, if my wilfulness and laziness be not the cause of my unbelief.

Sect. 5.

If it be said, *That God will satisfy the minds of good men concerning the truth of divine revelation.* I grant it to be wonderfully true; but all the question is *de modo*, how God will satisfy them? whether merely by inspiration of his own spirit in them, assuring them that it is *God* that speaks in such persons; or by giving them *rational evidence*, convincing them of sufficient grounds to believe it. If we allert the former way, we run



run into these inconveniences : *First*, We make as *immediate* a *revelation* in all those who believe, as in those who are to *reveal* divine truths to us ; for there is a new revelation of an *object* immediately to the *mind* ; viz. *that such a person is inspired of God* ; and so is not after the common way of the *Spirit's illumination* in *Believers*, which is by *inlightning* the *faculty*, without the *proposition* of any new *object* , as it is in the *work of Grace* : So that according to this opinion, there must be *immediate inspiration* as to that *act* of *faith*, whereby we believe any one to have been *divinely inspired*, and consequently to that whereby we believe *the Scriptures to be the Word of God*. . *Secondly*, Doth not this make the fairest plea for men's *unbelief* ? For, I demand, Is it the duty of those who want that *immediate illumination* to *believe* or no ? If it be not their duty , *unbelief* can be no *sin* to them ; if it be a *duty*, it must be made known to be a *duty* ; and how can that be made known to them to be a *duty*, when they want the only and necessary means of *instruction* in order to it ? Will *God* condemn them for that , which it was *impossible* they should have , unless *God* gave it them ? And how can they be left *inexcusable*, who want so much as *rational inducements* to faith ; for of these I now speak, and not of *efficacious persuasions* of the mind, when there are *rational arguments* for *faith* propounded. But, *lastly*, I suppose the case will be cleared, when we take notice what course *God* hath always taken to give all *rational satisfaction* to the *minds* of men, concerning the persons whom he hath employed in either of the forementioned cases. *First*, For those who have been employed upon some *special message* and *service* for *God*, he hath sent them forth sufficiently provided with manifestations of the *Divine power* whereby they acted ; as is most clear and evident in the present case of *Moses*, *Exodus* 4. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. where *Moses* puts the case to *God*, which we are now debating of. Supposing, faith he, that I should go to the *Israelites* and tell them, *God* had appeared to me, and sent me to deliver them, and they should say , *God* had not appeared unto me ; how should I satisfy them ? *God* doth not reject this *objection* of *Moses* as favouring of *unbelief*, but presently shews him how he should satisfy them , by causing a *miracle* before his face , *turning his Rod into a Serpent* ; and *God* gives this as the reason of it, *vers. 5. That they may believe that the*

Lord.

*Lord God of their Fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.* It seems God himself thought this would be the most *pregnant* evidence of God's appearing to him, if he wrought *miracles* before their faces. Nay, lest they should think one single miracle was not sufficient, *God* in the immediate following verses adjoins two more, which he should doe in order to their satisfaction; and further, *vers. 21.* *God* gave him a charge to doe all those wonders before *Pharaoh*, which he had put into his hand: And accordingly we find *Pharaoh* presently demanding a *miracle* of *Moses*, *Exodus, 7. 9.* which accordingly *Moses* did in his presence, though he might suppose *Pharaoh's* demand not to proceed from desire of satisfaction, but from some hopes that for want of it, he might have rendred his credit suspected among the *Israelites*.

*Seet. 6.*

Indeed after *God* had delivered his people, and had settled them in a way of serving him according to the *Laws* delivered by *Moses*, which he had confirmed by unquestionable *miracles* among them, we find a *caution* laid in by *Moses* himself, against those which should pretend signs and wonders to draw them off from the Religion established by the *Law* of *Moses*.  
 Deut. 13. 1, 2, And so likewise under the *Gospel*, after that was established  
 3. by the *unparalleld* miracles of our *Saviour* and the *Apostles*, we find frequent *cautions* against being deceived by those who came with pretences of doing great *miracles*. But this is so far from infringing the *credibility* of such a *Testimony* which is confirmed by *miracles*, that it yields a strong confirmation to the truth of what I now assert. For the *doctrine* is supposed to be already *established* by *miracles*, according to which we are to judge of the *spirits* of such *pretenders*. Now it stands to the greatest reason, that when a *Religion* is once *established* by uncontrolled *miracles*, we should not hearken to every whiffling *Conjurer* that will pretend to doe great feats, to draw us off from the truth established. In which case, the surest way to discover the *imposture* is, to compare his pretended *miracles* with those *true* and *real* ones which were done by *Moses* and *Christ*; and the ground of it is, because every person is no competent *judge* of the truth of a *miracle*; for the *Devil*, by his power and subtilty, may easily deceive all such as will be led by the nose by him, in expectation of some wonders to be  
 done



done by him. And therefore as long as we have no ground to question the *certainty* of those *miracles* which were wrought by *Christ* or *Moses*, I am bound to adhere to the *doctrine* established by those *miracles*, and to make them my rule of judging all persons who shall pretend to work *miracles*: Because,

1. I do not know how far *God* may give men over to be deceived by lying wonders, who will not receive the truth in the love of it; i. e. those that think not the *Christian Religion* sufficiently confirmed by the *miracles* wrought at the first promulgation of it. *God* in justice may permit the *Devil* to go further than otherwise he could, and leave such persons to their own credulity; to believe every imposture and illusion of their senses for true *miracles*. 2. That *doctrine* which was confirmed by undoubted *miracles*, hath assured us of the coming of lying wonders, whereby many should be deceived. Now this part of the doctrine of the *Gospel* is as certainly true as any of the rest; for it was confirmed by the same *miracles* that the other was; and besides that, the very coming of such *miracles* is an evidence of the truth of it, it falling out so exactly according to what was foretold so many hundred years since. Now if this *doctrine* be true, then am I certain the intent of these *miracles* is to deceive, and that those are deceived who hearken to them; and what reason then have I to believe them? 3. To what end do these *miracles* serve? Are they to confirm the truths contained in *Scripture*? But what need they any confirmation now, when we are assured by the *miracles* wrought by *Christ* and his *Apostles*, that the doctrine by them preached came from *God*? and so hath been received upon the credit of those *miracles* ever since. Were these truths sufficiently proved to be from *God* before or no? If not, then all former ages have believed without sufficient ground for faith; if they were, then what ground can there be to confirm us in them now? Certainly *God*, who never doth any thing but for very great purposes, will never alter the course of nature, merely for satisfaction of men's vain curiosities.

But it may be it will be said, *It was something not fully revealed in Scripture which is thus confirmed by miracles*: but where hath the *Scripture* told us, that any thing not fully revealed therein, should be afterwards confirmed? Was the *Scripture* an infallible rule of faith while this was wanting in it? Did *Christ*

1.

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3.

Seet. 7.

and his *Apostles* discharge their places, when they left something *unrevealed* to us? Was this a *duty* before these miracles, or no? if it *was*, what need *miracles* to confirm it? if *not*, *Christ* hath not told us all *necessary conditions* of *salvation*. For whatever is required as a *duty*, is such, as the neglect of it runs men upon *damnation*. *Lastly*, men's *faith* will be left at *continual uncertainties*; for we know not according to this *principle*, when we have all that is necessary to be *believed*, or doe all that is necessary to be *practised* in order to *salvation*. For if *God* may still make new *articles of faith*, or constitute new *duties* by fresh *miracles*, I must go and enquire what *miracles* are wrought in every *place*, to see that I miss nothing that may be *necessary* for me, in order to my happiness in another world.

If men pretend to deliver any doctrine *contrary* to the *Scripture*; then it is not only *necessary* that they *confirm* it by *miracles*, but they must manifest the *falsity* of those *miracles* on which that *doctrine* is believed, or else they must use another miracle to prove that *God* will set his *seal* to *confirm* both *parts* of a *contradiction* to be true. Which being the *hardest task* of all, had need be proved by very *sufficient* and *undoubted miracles*, such as may be able to make us believe *those are miracles*, and *are not*, at the same time, and so the *strength* of the *argument* is utterly destroyed by the *medium* produced to prove it by.

By this discourse these *two things* are clear; *First*, That no pretences of *miracles* are to be hearkned to, when the *doctrine* we are to believe is already *established* by them, if those *miracles* tend in the least to the *derogation* of the *truth* of what was *established* by those former *miracles*. *Secondly*, That when the full *doctrine* we are to believe is *established* by *miracles*, there is no necessity at all of new *miracles*, for *confirmation* of any of the *truths* therein delivered. And therefore it is a most *unreasonable* thing to demand *miracles* of those to prove the *truth* of the *doctrine* they deliver, who do *first* solemnly *profess* to deliver nothing but what was *confirmed* by *miracles* in the *first* delivery of it, and is contained in the *Scriptures* of the *Old and New Testament*, and *secondly* do not pretend to any *immediate Commission* from *heaven*, but do nothing but what in their consciences they think every *true Christian* is bound to doe; much more all *Magistrates* and *Ministers* who believe the *truth* of what they profess,



profess, which is in their places to reform all *errours* and *abuses* which are crept into the *doctrine* or *practice* of *Christianity*, through the corruption of men or times. And therefore it is a most unjust and unreasonable demand of the *Papists*, when they require *miracles* from our *first reformers*, to prove the *truth* of their *doctrine* with. Had they pretended to have come with an *immediate commission* from *heaven* to have added to the *Doctrine* of the *Gospel*, there had been some plea for such a demand; but it was quite otherwise with them: Their only design was, to *whip the buyers and sellers out of the Temple*, to purge the *Church* from its *abuses*: And although that by *Ferome* was thought to be one of our *Saviour's* greatest *miracles*, yet *this* by us is conceived to be no other than the *duty* of all *Magistrates*, *Ministers*, and *private Christians*; *these* by their *prayers*, *Ministers* by their *doctrine*, and *Magistrates* by their *just authority*.

#### C H A P. IV.

##### The fidelity of the Prophets succeeding *Moses*.

*An order of Prophets to succeed Moses, by God's own appointment in the Law of Moses. The Schools of the Prophets, the original and institution of them. The Cities of the Levites. The occasion of their first institution. The places of the Schools of the Prophets, and the tendency of the institution there to a prophetic office. Of the Musick used in the Schools of the Prophets. The Roman Assamenta, and the Greek Hymns in their solemn worship. The two sorts of Prophets among the Jews, Leiger and extraordinary. Ordinary Prophets taken out of the Schools, proved by Amos and Saul.*

**B**UT although now under the *Gospel* (the revelation of *God's Will* being compleated by *Christ* and his *Apostles*) we have no reason either to expect *new Revelations*, or *new Miracles* for confirming the *old*; yet under the *Law*, *God* training up his people by degrees till the coming of *Christ*, there was a necessity of a new supply of *Divine Messengers* (called

*Prophets*) to prepare the people, and make way for the coming of *Christ*. As to whom these two things are considerable.

First, *Those Prophets whose work was to inform the people of their duties, or to reprove them for their sins, or to prepare them for the coming of the Messiah* (which were their chief tasks) had no need to confirm the truth of their doctrine or commission from heaven by the working of miracles among them. And that on these two accounts.

First, *Because God did not consummate the revelation of his mind and will to the Jews by the Ministry of Moses, but appointed a succession of Prophets to be among them, to make known his mind unto them.* Now, in this case, when the prophetic office was established among them, what necessity was there that every one that came to them upon an errand from God, should prove his testimony to be true by miracles, when in the discharge of his office he delivered nothing dissonant from the Law of Moses? It is one argument God intended a succession of Prophets, when he laid down such rules in his Law for the judging of them, and to know whether they were truly inspired or no, *Deut. 18. 21, 22.* And in that same place God doth promise a succession of Prophets, *Deut. 18. 15, 18.* *A Prophet will the Lord God raise up unto thee like unto me; to him shall ye hearken.* Which words, though in their full and compleat sense they do relate to *Christ* (who is the great Prophet of the Church) yet who ever attends to the full scope of the words, will easily perceive that the immediate sense of them doth relate to an order of Prophets, which should succeed Moses among the Jews; between whom and Moses there would be a great similitude as to their Birth, Calling, and Doctrine, though not a just equality, which is excluded, *Deut. 34. 10, 11.* and the chief reason why it is said there that the other Prophets fell so much short of Moses is, in regard of the signs and wonders which he wrought, as is there largely expressed. Nor may it seem strange, that by a Prophet should be understood an order or succession of Prophets, when it is acknowledged by most Protestants, that by ἀντίχριστος, the Antichrist, is understood a rank and succession of several persons in the same name and function: And that it is to be understood in those words concerning a succession of Prophets, will appear by the occasion of their being brought in; for ver. 14. *God prohibits them*



to hearken after the manner of their Neighbour-nations, to observers of times and diviners, and then brings in the following words, *v. 15.* as to the reason of that prohibition, that God would raise up a Prophet among themselves like unto Moses, and to him should they hearken. Now let any rational man judge whether it were so probable an argument to keep them from hearkning to Diviners of other Nations, that there should a Prophet arise 2000 years after like unto Moses, as that he would raise up a continued succession of Prophets among themselves, to whom they should hearken. Thus Origen in his excellent Books against Celsus, shews the necessity of the Prophetical office among the Jews from hence; for, saith he, it being written in their Law that the Gentiles hearkened unto Oracles and Divinations; but God would not suffer it to be so among them, it presently follows, *A Prophet will the Lord God raise up in the midst of thee, &c.* Therefore, saith he, when the Nations round about them had their Oracles, and several ways of divination, all which were strictly prohibited among the Jews, if the Jews had no way of foreknowing things to come, it had been almost impossible, considering the great curiosity of humane nature, to have kept them from despising the Law of Moses, or apostatizing to the heathen Oracles, or setting up something like them among themselves. Which interpretation of his seems to have a great deal of reason, not only from the coherence of the words here, but from the Analogy of many other precepts of the Law of Moses, which it is most certain have a respect to the customs of the Idolatrous Nations round about them. Another reason why it is most probable, that by this is understood a succession of Prophets, is the charge which follows against false Prophets, and the rules to discover them, *ver. 20, 21, 22.* which had not been so pertinent and coherent if the opposition did not lie between the order of true Prophets among the Jews, and the false Prophets, which should rise up in the midst of them. And that which yet further justifies this interpretation, is, that there is no other place in the whole Pentateuch which doth expressly speak of a succession of Prophets, if this be not understood of it; and is it any ways probable a matter of so great moment and consequence should be wholly pretermitted? Especially when we find it so exactly performed in the succeeding Ages of the Jewish Commonwealth; their im-

mediate

*V. Arabic. vers.  
& Calv. in loc.  
P. Fagium, P.  
Martyr. Loc.  
Com. Class. 1.  
cap. 3. Sect. 12.*

*C. Celsus. l. 1.  
Deut. 18. 14.*

mediate Rulers like *Dictators* at *Rome*, after *Moses's* death, being most raised up by *immediate incitation* and *impulse* from *God*, and many of them *inspired* with a *spirit of Prophecy*. How should the *Jews* have expected these, or obeyed them when they appeared, had not *God* foretold it to them, and provided them for it by the *Law of Moses*?

Sect. 2.

Neither did these *Prophets* arise singly among them, like *blazing Stars*, one in an Age, to *portend future events*, but whole *Constellations* of them sometimes appeared together; yea, so many smaller *Prophets* were sometimes united together, as made up a perfect *Galaxy*, when they were entred into *Societies*, and became *Schools of the Prophets*; for such we frequently read of in Scripture. The *original* and *institution* of which may cast a *further light* into our present design, and shew us the little reason the *Jews* could have to expect miracles from them to confirm their doctrine, who were brought up in the knowledge of their *Law*, and were called out from their several *Societies* into the prophetic office by the *immediate incitation* of *God* himself. Which being so commonly known among them, there needed no such extraordinary proofs to manifest the *Divine authority* by which they were employed. Two things then we shall endeavour to clear; First, the *original* and *institution* of these *Schools of the Prophets*; and Secondly, That it was the ordinary course for the *Prophets* by employment to be taken forth of these societies where-in they were educated. First, for the *original* and *institution* of these *Schools of the Prophets*. The first *Seminaries*, or places of institution among the *Jews*, were the *Cities* of the *Levites*, which were dispersed up and down in the several *Tribes* of *Israel*; *God* thereby turning that into a blessing, which was pronounced as a *curse* upon *Levi* by his Father *Jacob*, viz. that he should be divided in *Jacob*, and scattered in *Israel*. But though the fulfilling of that Prophecy might be the primary ground of that scattering, yet it is evident that *God* aimed at some further good in it, both in reference to the *Levites* and the *Israelites*. *Lyra* undertakes to assign four reasons of this distribution of the *Cities* of the *Levites* among the *Tribes*. (1) Because if they had lived but in one *Tribe*, the worship of *God* would have seemed to have been confined to that *Tribe*. (2.) Because they would have been a burden to that

Tribe

Gen. 49. 7.

Josh. 21.



*Tribe* they had their habitations in (3.) From the *equity* of being maintained by all who served for all. (4.) Because it was their office to *teach* the *people*, and therefore it was necessary they should live among them. These reasons are most of them *opposed* by *Abulensis*, but defended by others. The *last* is that which most insist on, it being the peculiar office of the *Levites* to teach the people; so 2 Chron. 35. 4. *And said unto the Levites, qui erudiebant omnem Israel*, as *Vatablus* renders it, *who taught all Israel*; and *Masius* insists on that as the great reason of their dispersion, to be ready to teach the *Law* among the *Israelites*. But yet all those who are agreed that *teaching* the *Law* was the *duty* of the *Levites*, are not yet agreed of the *manner* of that *teaching*; for there being *two* parts of their *Law*, the one *ceremonial* and *judicial*, and the other *moral* and *spiritual*, the question is, whether of these two did belong to, or was performed by the *Priests* and *Levites*. There are many who understand all that Office of *teaching* which belonged to the *Priests* and *Levites*, to be merely concerning the *ceremonial* part of the *Law*, i. e. deciding all *cases* of *controversie* which should arise concerning their ceremonial worship, which in *Levit.* 10. 10. is called *putting a difference between holy and unholy, and between clean and unclean*. But it seems somewhat strange that *God* should take so great care about the *shell* and *outside* of his *worship*, and none at all for the *moral* and *spiritual* part of it, especially when he had set apart a *whole Tribe* merely for his own service, and freed them from all other employments, that they might have a greater liberty to attend upon the things relating to his service; especially when it is mentioned as the duty of the *Priests* and *Levites* to *teach all the statutes which the Lord had spoken to them by the hand of Moses*, and that *they shall teach Jacob thy statutes, and Israel thy Law*. Which notwithstanding what *Abarbinel* and others say, must certainly comprehend as well the *moral* as the *ceremonial* part of *Moses* his *Law*. And the *Priests* lips are said to *preserve knowledge*: and *God* saith *they should seek the Law at his mouth*; for *he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts*. Do these things import no more than mere deciding the *cases* of the *ceremonial Law*? But whatever *God's* intention in the *institution* of the *Levites* was, we find not much in *Scripture* of what they did for the promoting the

*Abul. in Josh*  
21. c. 7, & 8.  
*V. Sherlog.*  
*Antiq. Hebr. l. 2.*  
c. 3. f. 4.  
*Masius in Josh.*  
c. 14.

*Lev. 10. 10.*  
*Deut. 33. 10.*

*Mal. 2. 7.*

*moral*

*moral and spiritual part* of divine worship; but it is no news to hear that *Societies* instituted for good and pious ends, should degenerate from the first intention of the Founders of them; and thus it is probable it was with the *Levites*, who finding the most of their benefit and advantage to come in by the *ceremonial cases*, might grow more *negligent* of the *moral part of divine service*, which brought no secular emolument to them.

Sett. 3.

And thence we read not of these *Schools of the Prophets*, which were *Societies* in order to *spiritual instruction*, till about the time of *Samuel*; and many think him to have been the first *Author* of them. For it is evident, that about his time the *Priesthood* was grown to a great *degeneracy*, and men thereby estranged from the worship of God, so that there seemed almost a *necessity* then of restoring some *Societies*, who might have a special eye to the spiritual part of God's worship and service. The occasion of the institution of them, seems to have been from the resort which the people had to the high places for *sacrificing*, during the captivity or uncertain abode of the *Ark of God*, after the *desolation* of *Shiloh*: now the people resorting to these places to perform their Solemnities,

1 Sam. 3. 1.

1 Sam. 9. 12,

13.

it was so ordered, that a company of *Prophets* should be there resident to *blest the sacrifices*, and instruct the people. Two of these places with these *Societies* in them we find mentioned in the time of *Samuel*. The first mentioned, 1 Sam. 10. 5, 10. which cannot be the same with *Ramah*, although the *Syriack* and *Arabick versions* so render it. For *Samuel* had his own residence in *Ramah* whither *Saul* went to him, 1 Sam. 9. 18, 19. but in this Chapter we find *Samuel sending Saul* on a journey from him beyond *Bethel* and the plain of *Tabor*, and there tells him he should meet with the company of *Prophets upon the hill of God*, ver. 5. Some think it was called the *Hill of God*, because of its height, as the *Cedars of God* and the *mountains of God for the highest*; so *Tirinus* understands it, but *Menochius* far more probably, *quia in ea erat cætus & veluti schola prophetarum*. The *Chaldee Paraphrast* renders it, *ad collum in quo arca Domini*. R. *Solomon* makes this hill to be *Kir-jab-jearim*, and therefore called the *hill of God*, because the *Ark* was there in the house of *Abinadab* in the hill. But *Lyra* thinks he hath proved, that before this time the *Ark* was removed

1 Sam. 7. 1.



moved from *Kirjath-jearim* to *Mizpah*; but *Abulensis* more *V. Jun. in l.*  
 probably conceives it was never removed *thither*, and withal  
 thinks *this hill of God* to be no other than *Gibeah of Benjamin*,  
 where *Saul* inhabited; and thence the wonder was the greater,  
 to see him *propheſe* among thoſe who had known his former  
 life and education. The other place is *Naioth* in *Ramah*, *1 Sam. 19. 18,*  
 where was a *high place* whither the people came to ſacrifice; *20.*  
 this *Ramah* ſeems to have been the place of *Samuel's* nativity, *1 Sam. 1. 1.*  
 called *Ramathaim Sophim*, which the *Syriack version* renders  
*collis specularum* (ſome who would be ready to improve every  
 thing for their purpoſe, would think it was ſo called in allu-  
 ſion to the imployment of the young Students there. So  
*Heinfius* conceives *שרה צפיר* to be underſtood, *Numb. 23. 14.* *Exercit. Sacrae.*  
 the place of *watchmen*, from which word ſaith he, without *l. 1. c. 2.*  
 doubt, the *Greeks* derived their *σφοι*, who were wont in  
 ſuch *high places* to obſerve the *courſe and motions of the heavens*;  
 But to paſs by ſuch frivolous conjectures.) It ſeems a great  
 deal more probable, that this *Ramah* which the *Septuagint* by  
 a light mutation of the initial letters calls *ἀρμαθαιμ*, was the  
 ſame with *Arimathæa*, the Town of *Joſeph* mentioned in the  
*Gospel*. But the place where the *ſchool of the Prophets* was,  
 ſeems to have been, with greateſt conveniency, for a place  
 of *education*, at ſome diſtance from the Town. *Vatablus* con-  
 ceives it was built in the *fields of Ramah*, and the word *Naioth*,  
 ſaith *Pet. Martyr*, properly ſignifies *paſtures*, and ſome remote  
 places, *quæ fere ſunt ſtudiis aptiſſima*. The *Chaldee Paraphraſt*  
 renders *Naioth* by *כית אילבנא* a *Colledge or School of prophe-*  
*tical education*: over this *Colledge Samuel* himſelf was *Preſi-*  
*dent*, as moſt underſtand that place, *1 Sam. 19. 20.* And when  
 they ſaw the company of *Prophets propheſing*, and *Samuel ſtanding*  
 as appointed over them; *Jonathan* renders it, & *Samuelem ſtante*  
*docentem ſuper eos*. To which we may well apply the words of  
*Philo*, ſpeaking of the *Jewiſh manner of inſtruction*, *τὸ μὲν ἡγε-*  
*μένον* ὑπερχωρὶς καὶ ἀποστασέν, καὶ ὁ δὲ ἐπιδιδόντων εἰς ἀλοκαγαθίαν καὶ *Philo. de v. Moſ.*  
*βελτιωμάτων* τότε ἔτι καὶ βίον. The *Preſident going before and teach-*  
*ing, the reſt increaſing in goodneſs, and improving in life and manners.* *l. 3.*

Neither can we think ſo good and uſeful an *inſtitution*, ſhould  
 preſently *degenerate* or be turned into another channel; and  
 therefore ſome conceive that the moſt noted *Prophets* to the  
 time of *David* were the *Preſidents* of theſe *Colledges*; ſuch

Seſt. 4.

as besides *Samuel* were *Helcana, Gad, Nathan, Heman, and Jeduthun*; and that they selected out the choicest and most hopeful of the young *Levites*, and here educated them, together with the *Nazarites* which came out of other tribes. And it seems very probable, that in all the most noted high places whither they went to sacrifice, there were such *Schools* erected after the first institution of them. Thence we read of such multitudes of the *Prophets* together, in the time of *Ahab*, 1 Kings 18. 4. for when *Jezebel* cut off the *Prophets* of the Lord, *Obadiah* took an hundred and hid them in caves; certainly their number was very great, when an hundred might be saved without missing. The chief places where they resided, seem to have been *Bethel*, 2 Kings 2. 3. and *Jericho*, which was a Large Colledge; for therein we read of fifty sons of the *Prophets* standing together out of their number, 2 Kings 2. 5, 7, 15. and *Gilgal*, which had been a place of Religion from the first entrance into *Canaan*; there we find the sons of the *Prophets* sitting before *Elisha*, 2 Kings 4. 38. It seems most probable that the purity of God's worship among the ten tribes after the defection in the time of *Jeroboam* was preserved by the *Prophets* in their several *Schools* and places of habitation; which hath sufficient foundation in that place, 2 Kings 4. 23. where the *Shunamite's* husband asks her wherefore she would go to the man of God that day, seeing it was neither new-moon nor Sabbath. Whereby it is both evident, that the *Prophets* did undertake the office of instructing the people on their solemn Festivals, and that it was their custom to resort to them for that end. Thus we see what care God took for the instruction of his people in a time of so general an Apostasy as that of the ten tribes was, when the Church of God could not be known by that constant visibility and outward Glory which some speak so much of, but was then clouded in obscurity, and shrouded it self under the mantles of some *Prophets* which God continued among them, and that not by any lineal succession neither, though the Jews would fain make the gift of Prophecy to be a kind of Cabala too, and conveyed in a constant succession from one Prophet to another. Neither were these *Schools* of the *Prophets* only in *Israel*, but in *Judah* likewise was God known, and his Name was great among these *Schools* there. In *Jerusalem* it self there was a Colledge where *Huldah* the Prophetess lived.

V. Manass. Ben  
Israel Concil. in  
Exod. 9. 35.



lived, 2 Kings 22. 14. some render *Mishna* in *secunda urbis parte*; for *Jerusalem* was divided into the *upper* and *nether part* of the City. *Abulensis* and *Lyra* will have it refer to the *three Walls* of the City in which the *three chief parts* of it were comprized; in the *first*, the *Temple* and the *King's Palace*; in the *second*, the *Nobles* and the *Prophets houses*; and in the *third*, the *common people*. *Josephus* seems to favour the division of the City into *three parts*; but *Pineda* thinks the *second part* of the City was most inhabited by *Artificers*, and that the *Prophets*, and the *wise men*, and such as frequented the *Temple*, most dwelt in the City of *David* within the *first wall*; and therefore he conjectures that the *Colledge* was upon *Mount Sion*, (and so properly called *Sion Colledge*) and he explains that *house* which *wisdom* is said to have built, and hewn out her *seven pillars*, Prov. 9. 1. by this *Colledge*, which he supposeth was built by *Solomon* in *Mount Sion*, and thence ver. 3. *she* is said to cry upon the *highest places* of the City. Thus much may serve concerning the *original* and *institution* of these *Schools* of the *Prophets*.

*Jos. de bell. Jud.*  
l. 6. c. 6. *Pineda*  
*de rebus Sol.*  
l. 3. c. 28.

I now come to the second thing promised concerning the *Schools* of the *Prophets*, which is, that it was *God's ordinary method* to call those persons out of these *Schools*, whom he did employ in the discharge of the *Prophetical office*. Two things will be necessary for the clearing of this: *First*, what *tendency* their education in those *Schools* had towards the fitting them for their *prophetical Office*. Secondly, what *evidence* the *Scripture* gives us that *God* called the *Prophets* out from these *Colledges*. The *first* of these is very requisite to be cleared, because the *prophetical office* depending upon *immediate inspiration*, it is hard to conceive what *influence* any *antecedent* and *preparatory dispositions* can have upon receiving the *prophetical spirit*. It is commonly known how much the generality of *Jewish Writers* do insist on the necessity of these *qualifications* antecedent to a *spirit of Prophecy*. 1. *An excellent natural temper*. 2. *Good accomplishments both of wit and fortunes*. 3. *Separation from the world*. 4. *Congruity of place* (which they make proper to *Judæa*) 5. *Opportunity of time*. 6. *And divine inspiration*. These are so largely discoursed of by many learned men from *Jewish Writers*, that it will be both tedious and impertinent to recite much of their opinions concerning

Self. 5.

*V. G. Vor. in*  
*Maim, fundam.*  
*leg. c. 7. Self. 1.*  
*Mr. Smith of*  
*Prophecy. c. 8.*

cerning them : who, since they have lost the gift of *Prophecy*, seem to have lost too that *wisdom* and *natural understanding*, which they make one of the most *necessary qualifications* of a *Prophet*. It is not easie to imagine what subserviency *riches* could have to a *prophetical spirit*, unless the *Jews* be of *Simon Magus* his opinion, that these gifts of the *Holy Ghost* may be purchased with money ; and if so, they think themselves in as likely a way to bid fair for a *prophetical spirit*, as any People in the world. Or is it that they think it impossible any without them should have that *free, cheerfull and generous spirit*, which they make so necessary to a *prophetick spirit*, that it is an axiome of great authority with them, *Spiritus sanctus non residet super hominem mæstum* ; and they think *Elisha* his fit of passion did excus his *prophetick spirit* from him, which he was fain to retrieve again with a fit of *Musick*. There are only two sorts of those *antecedent dispositions* which seem to bear any *affinity* with the *prophetick spirit* : And those are such as tended to the *improvement* of their *natural faculties*, and such as tended to their *advancement* in *piety*, and consequently to the subduing all *irregular motions* in their souls: Not that either of these did *concurr* by way of efficiency to the production of a *spirit of Prophecy* (which is an opinion *Maimonides* seems very favourable to) but that *God* might make *choice* particularly of such *persons*, to remove all *prejudices* against them in those they were sent unto. For nothing could possibly dissatisfie them more concerning *divine inspiration*, than if the person who pretended to it were of very *weak* and *shallow intellectuals*, or known to be of an *irregular conversation*. In order therefore to the fuller *satisfaction* of men concerning these two *qualifications*, this *Institution* of them in the *Schools* of the *Prophets* was of great *subserviency*, because therein their only *employment* was to *improve* in *knowledge*, and especially in *true piety*. This latter being the most necessary disposition, since the *Apostle* hath told us that the *Prophets* were *Holy men, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*. And in order to this, the greatest part we can find of the *exercises* of those who were educated in these *Schools* of the *Prophets*, were *instructions* in the *Law*, and the solemn *celebration* of the *praises* of *God*: Which appears in *Scripture* to have been their chief employment as *Prophets*, and by which they

are

More Newoc.  
l. 2. c. 36.

2 Pet. 1. 21.



are said to *Prophesie*: So at Gibeah at the Oratory there, we find a company of *Prophets* coming down from the high place with a *Psaltery*, a *Tabret* and *Pipe*, and a *Harp* before them, and *Propheſying*. 1 Sam. 10. 5.

It may ſeem ſomewhat ſtrange to conſider what relation theſe *Muſical instruments* had to the *Propheſying* here mentioned. Are *Muſical notes* like ſome ſeeds *Naturaliſts* ſpeak of, which will help to excite a prophetick ſpirit? Or do they tend to elevate the ſpirits of men, and ſo put them into a greater capacity of *Enthuſiaſm*? Or is it becauſe *Muſick* is ſo excellent for allaying the tumults of inward paſſions; and ſo fitting the ſoul for the better entertainment of the *Divine Spirit*? Or was all this *Propheſying* here ſpoken of nothing elſe but vocal and *instrumental Muſick*? So ſome indeed underſtand it, that it was only the praizing God with ſpiritual ſongs and melody; wherein one as the *Præcentor* began a hymn, which the reſt took from him and carried on. I confeſs it carries the faireſt probability with it, that this *Propheſying* with *Muſical instruments* was at their places and times of ſacrifice, an adjunct, if not a part of the ſolemn ſervice of God: which was managed chiefly by the *Choir* of the *Sons of the Prophets* which were reſident there, and were trained up in all exerciſes of piety and devotion. But yet I cannot ſee any reaſon to think that all this *Propheſying* was merely ſinging of *Hymns*, and playing upon their *Muſical instruments* to them, as ſome imagine, becauſe there ſeems to be implied ſome immediate impulses of a prophetick ſpirit, by what *Samuel* ſaid to *Saul*, that when he came among the *Prophets*, the Spirit of the Lord would come upon him, and he ſhould propheſie with them, and he ſhould become another man. What ſtrange impulse and wonderfull transformation was this merely for *Saul* to join with the *Prophets* in their praifes of God? And this needed not ſo much admiration as followed there upon this action of *Saul's*, that it ſhould become a Proverb, Is *Saul* alſo among the *Prophets*? Certainly *Saul* was a very great hater of all ſpiritual Muſick before, if it became a Proverb merely for his being preſent at, or joyning with this company in ſinging their *Hymns*. Therefore others think that thoſe who are ſaid particularly to propheſie at theſe *Muſick meetings*, were ſome perſons as chief among the reſt, who having their ſpirits elevated by the *Muſick*, did compoſe Hymns, Sect. 6. 1 Sam. 10. 6. 1 Sam. 10. 13.

*Hymns* upon the place by a *Divine Energy* inwardly moving their *minds*. So that there were properly *divine raptures* in some of them, which transported them beyond the ordinary power of *fancy* or *imagination*, in dictating such *Hymns* as might be *suitable* for the design of celebrating the *honour* of *God*.

Sect. 7.

Neither may it seem strange that such an *Enthusiastick Spirit* should seize on them only at such *solemn times*, since we read in the *New Testament* of a like exercise of such gifts in the *Church of Corinth*, 1 *Cor.* 14. 26. where we see in coming together every one had a *Psalm*, a *Doctrine*, a *Tongue*, a *Revelation*, &c. Whereby it appears that they were inspired upon the place; *etiam extemporales Hymni saepe ab afflatu erant*, as *Grotius* there observes; as we see it in frequent instances in *Scripture*, of *Simeon* and *Anna*, *Moses* and *Miriam*, *Deborah* and *Isaiah*; and in the *Christian Church* after that *Land-flood* of inspired gifts was much abated in the *Church*, they kept up a *custom* much like to these *extemporal hymns*, as appears evidently by *Tertullian*, *post aquam manualet & lumina ut quisque de Scripturis sanctis vel de proprio ingenio potest*, *provocatur in medium Deo canere*; After they had ended their *Love-Feasts*, they begun their *Hymns*, which were either taken from the *Scriptures*, or of their own composition. Which *Pliny* takes notice of as a great part of the *Christians* worship, that they did *secum invicem carmen Christo quasi Deo dicere*, they joyned in singing hymns to *Christ* as *God*. Nay, we find something very parallel to this preserved among the ruins of the *Heathen worship*; such were the *Assamenta* among the old *Romans*, which were peculiarly sung to the honour of some particular *God*; thence the *Assamenta Janualia*, *Junonia*, *Minervia*, which were *privata poemata & carmina in singulos eos Deos conscripta*, as the learned *Joseph Scaliger* observes. So likewise the *Greeks* had their *solemn hymns* to their *Gods*, some to the propitious *Gods*, which they called *καλῆς θυμῶν*, and the *Latins* properly *Indigitamenta*, and *Carmen calatorium*; others they had to their *Vejoves*, or *Læva numina*, which they called *θυμῶν ἀποτροπαιῶν* the *Latins*, *Carmen Averruncale*; but besides these, they had some peculiar to the several *Deities*, as *ὁ Ἰππότης* to *Diana*, *Πάριον* to *Apollo*, *Ἰέρα* to *Ceres*, *Dithyrambus* to *Bacchus*, *Adonidia* to *Adonis*, as *Proclustells* us in his *Chrestomathia*. And it is withall evident, that the *Heathens* thought some of their

Apcl. c. 39.

Ep. l. 10.

Ep. 97.

Conject. in  
Varr. p. 121.



their Priests inspired while they were performing these solemn *Apud Phot. Bib. Cod. 239.*  
*Devotions* to the Gods ( which probably was by Satan, as ma-  
 ny other things in *Heathen worship* taken up in imitation of  
 these inspired hymns, and *Musick* used by the sons of the *Pro-*  
*phets* ) but their hymns were so composed, as to be fit rather to  
 transport men beyond the power of their reason, than to com-  
 pose and sweeten it, which was suitable to the fanatick *Enthu-*  
*siasm*, which was so common among them. So *Proclus* tells  
 us that the *Io-Bacche* was βαβατισμός ὁ πολλὸν θρούγγμασι, full  
 of noise and din; and the *Dithyrambus* was κεννημός ὁ καὶ πολὺ  
 τὸ ἐνθουσιάζειν, καὶ χορείας ἐμπαίγων, a kind of extatick Moricedance,  
 and their Priests were apprehended by them to be under a re-  
 al *Enthusiasm* at these Solemnities. So the *Corybantes* are de-  
 scribed rather like mad men than mere *Enthusiasts* by *Strabo* ;  
 they were ἐνθουσιαστικοὶ πνες καὶ βακχικοὶ, as he describes them,  
 dancing about with their cymbals and drums, and arms and pipes,  
 ( as though a *Bedlam* had been broke loose among them ) yet  
 this was in high esteem among them; for, as *Strabo* after *Geogr. l. 10.*  
 saith, ὅτε ἐνθουσιασμός ἐπίνευσιν πνα θεῶν ἔχον δοκεῖ, καὶ τοῦ μαυτικῷ  
 ὅλως πλησιάζειν, this *Enthusiasm* seemed to have a divine touch  
 with it, and to come very near to a prophetick spirit.

But though the *Propheying* with *Musick* among the sons of  
 the *Prophets*, might be by some extemporary hymns immedi-  
 ately dictated by the *Præcentor* of the *Chorus*; yet we are not  
 to imagine any such frantick actions among them as were a-  
 mong the *Curetes* and *Corybantes*, it being always the *Devil's*  
 temper to over-doe, when he strives to imitate, and instead of  
 solemn and set devotions, to carry men beyond all sense and rea-  
 son. The Spirit of God did never dictate any *Io-Bacche's* or  
*Dithyrambs* to transport and amuse the spirits of men; but  
 those sweet airs which might both compose and elevate the spi-  
 rits of all that heard them. For in probability the spirits of  
 all these *Prophets* were as *Lutes* tuned to the same height, that  
 when the Spirit of God did strike upon one of them, the rest  
 presently answered to it, and so made up an entire Consort a-  
 mong them. So *Menochius* thinks the Spirit of God not on-  
 ly moved the spirit of him who was the *Præcentor*, but the  
 rest likewise who joyned with him; and they are said to pro-  
 phesie, saith *Torniellus*, forte quod non quascunque sed Propheti-  
 cas duntaxat canticiones præcinerent; but from hence we clearly  
*Annal. ad A.M. 2945. Sect. 14.*  
 see

see what the great *employment* was in these *Schools* of the *Prophets*, which, as the same Author expresseth, it was *statis horis de rebus divinis differere & divinis laudibus vacare*; and thereby we understand what reference this *institution* had in order to the *prophetical office*, because the *Spirit* of God did much appear among them, and all their *exercises* tended to *piety*, and so did remove all *prejudices* from their *persons*, when God did send them abroad afterwards.

Sett. 8.

And so it is evident he frequently did, not to say always, for that were to put too great a restraint upon the *boundless spirit* of God: For sometimes, as will appear afterwards, God sent the *Prophets* upon *extraordinary messages*, and then furnished them with *sufficient evidence* of their *Divine commission*, without being beholding to the *Testimonials* of the *Schools* of the *Prophets*. But besides these, God had a kind of *Leiger-Prophets* among his *People*; such were the most of those whom we read of in *Scripture*, which were no *Pen-men* of the *sacred Scripture*; such in *David's* time we may conceive *Gad* and *Nathan*, and afterwards we read of many other *Prophets* and *Seers* among them, to whom the people made their resort; Now these in probability were such as had been *trained up* in the *Prophetick Schools*, wherein the *Spirit* of God did appear, but in a more *fixed* and *settled* way than in the *extraordinary Prophets* whom God did call out on some more *signal occasions*, such as *Isaiah* and *Jeremiah* were. We have a clear foundation for such a *distinction* of *Prophets* in those words of *Amos* to *Amaziah*, *Amos* 7. 14, 15. *I was no Prophet, neither was I a Prophets son; but I was a herdsman and a gatherer of Sycamore fruits: And the Lord took me as I followed the flock; and the Lord said unto me, Go prophesie to my people Israel.* Some understand the first words, *I was not a Prophet*, that he was not born a *Prophet*, as *Jeremiah* was, not designed and set apart to it from his *mother's womb*; but I rather think by his not being a *Prophet*, he means, he was none of those *resident Prophets* in the *Colledges* or *Schools* of them, not any of those who had led a *prophetick life*, and withdrawn themselves from *converse* with the *world*; nor was I (saith he) *the son of a Prophet*, i. e. not brought up in *discipleship* under those *Prophets*, and thereby *trained up* in order to the *prophetick function*. *Non didici inter discipulos Prophetarum*, as *Pellican* renders it; *nec institutione*



*stitutione qua filii Prophetarum quasi ad donum Prophetiæ à parentibus præparabantur, saith Estius. Non à puero educatus in Scholis Propheticis; so Calvin and most other modern Interpreters understand it as well as Abarbinel and the Jewish Writers. Whereby it is evident that God's ordinary way for the Prophets, was to take such as had been trained up and educated in order to that end, although God did not tie up himself to this method, but sometimes called one from the Court, as he did Isaiab; sometimes one from the herds, as here he did Amos, and bid them go prophesie to the house of Israel. There was then a kind of a standing College of Prophets among the Israelites, who shined as fixed Stars in the Firmament; and there were others who had a more planetary motion, and withall a more lively and resplendent illumination from the fountain of prophetick light. And further it seems that the spirit of Prophecy\* did not ordinarily seize on any, but such whose institution was in order to that end, by the great admiration which was caused among the people at Saul's so sudden prophesying, that it became a Proverb, Is Saul also among the Prophets? which had not given the least foundation for an adage for a strange and unwonted thing, unless the most common appearances of the spirit of Prophecy had been among those who were trained up in order to it. Thus I suppose we have fully cleared the first reason why there was no necessity for the ordinary Prophets, whose chief office was instruction of the people, to prove their commission by miracles, because God had promised a succession of Prophets by Moses, and these were brought up ordinarily to that end among them; so that all prejudices were sufficiently removed from their persons without any such extraordinary power as that of miracles.*

1 Sam. 10. 12,  
19, 24.

## C H A P. V.

## The tryal of Prophetical Doctrine.

*Rules of trying Prophets established in the Law of Moses. The punishment of pretenders. The several sorts of false Prophets. The case of the Prophet at Bethel discussed. The tryal of false Prophets belonging to the great Sanhedrin. The particular rules whereby the doctrine of Prophets was judged. The proper notion of a Prophet, not foretelling future contingencies, but having immediate divine revelation. Several principles laid down for clearing the doctrine of the Prophets. 1. That immediate dictates of natural light are not to be the measure of divine revelation. Several grounds for divine revelation from natural light. 2. Whatever is directly repugnant to the dictates of nature, cannot be of divine revelation. 3. No divine revelation doth contradict a divine positive Law without sufficient evidence of God's intention to repeal that Law. 4. Divine revelation in the Prophets was not to be measured by the words of the Law, but by the intention and reason of it. The prophetical Office a kind of Chancery to the Law of Moses.*

## Sect. I.

**T**HE second reason why those Prophets whose main office was instruction of the people, or merely foretelling future events, needed not to confirm their doctrine by miracles, is, because they had certain rules of tryal by their Law whereby to discern the false Prophets from the true. So that if they were deceived by them, it was their own oscitancy and inadvertency which was the cause of it. God in that Law which was confirmed by miracles undoubtedly divine, had established a Court of tryal for prophetick Spirits, and given such certain rules of procedure in it, that no men needed to be deceived unless they would themselves. And there was a greater necessity of such a certain way of tryal among them, because it could not otherwise be expected but in a Nation where a prophetick Spirit was so common, there would be very many pretenders to it, who might much endanger the faith of the people unless there were some certain way to find them out. And the more effectually to deter men either from counterfeiting a prophetick Spirit,

OR



or from hearkening to such as did, God appointed a severe punishment for every such pretender, viz. upon legal conviction, that he be punished with death. Deut. 18. 20. But the Prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other Gods, shall surely die. The Jews generally understand this of strangling, as they do always in the Law, when the particular manner of death is not expressed. And therein a false prophet and a seducer were distinguished each from other, that a mere seducer was to be stoned to death under sufficient testimony, Deut. 13. 6, 10. But the false prophet is there said in general only to be put to death, Deut. 13. 1, 5. The main difference between the seducer and false prophet was, that the seducer sought by cunning persuasions and plausible arguments to draw them off from the worship of the true God; but the false prophet always pretended divine revelation for what he persuaded them to, whether he gave out that he had that revelation from the true God, or from Idols and false Gods. So that the mere pretence to divine revelation was that which God would have punished with so great severity.

*V. Maimon. de Idol. c. 5. f. 1. & ibi Possium.*

*Sect. 2.*

The Jews tell us of three sorts of prophets who were to be punished with death by men, and three other sorts who were reserved to divine punishment: Of the first rank were these; 1. He that prophesied that which he had not heard, and for this they instance in Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah, who made him horns of iron, and said, Thus saith the Lord, this was the lying prophet. 2. He that speaks that which was revealed not to him but to another, and for this they instance in Hananiah the son of Azur, (but how truly I shall not determine) this was the plagiary prophet. 3. He that prophesied in the name of an Idol, as the prophets of Baal did, this was the idol prophet. These three, when once fully convicted, were to be put to death. The other rank of those which were left to God's hand consisted of these; 1. He that stifles and smothers his own prophecy, as Jonas did, by which it may seem that when the divine Spirit did overshadow the understanding of the prophets, yet it offered no violence to their faculties, but left them to the free determination of their own wills in the execution of their office; but this must be understood of a lower degree of prophecy; for at some times their prophecies were as fire in their bones, that they

*V. Except. Gem. Sanhed. c. 10. f. 3.*

*1 King. 22. 11.*

*Jer. 28. 11.*

*Jer. 20. 9.*

they were never at any rest till they had discharged their office. But withall by the example of *Jonas*, we see, that though the Spirit of prophecy, like the fire on the Altar, could only be kindled from heaven, yet it might be destroyed when it was not maintained with something to feed upon; or when it met not with suitable entertainment from the spirits of those it fell upon, it might retreat back again to heaven, or at least lie hid in the embers till a new blast from the Spirit of God doth *ἀναζωοποιῆν*, retrieve it into its former heat and activity. Thus it was with *Jonas*. 2. The other was, He that despised the words of a true prophet; of such God saith, Deut. 18. 19. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken to my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. Which *Maimonides* explains by מיתה בירי שמים, death by the hands of God, which he thus distinguisheth from the Cereth, that he makes the death *per manus cæli*, to be less than the Cereth, because this latter continued in the soul after death, but the other was expiated by death; but generally they interpret it of a sudden death which falls upon the person. 3. The last is, he who hearkens not to the words of his own prophecy; of which we have a most remarkable instance in Scripture, concerning the Prophet whom God sent to Bethel (whom *Tertullian* calls *Sameas*, the Jews, *Hedua*) whom God destroyed in an unusual manner for not observing the command which God had given him; not to eat bread nor drink water at Bethel, nor turn again by the way he came. Neither was it any excuse to this Prophet that the old Prophet at Bethel told him that an Angel spake unto him by the word of the Lord, that he should turn back. For, 1. Those whom God reveals his will unto, he gives them full assurance of it, in that they have a clear and distinct perception of God upon their own minds; and so they have no doubt, but it is the Word of the Lord which comes unto them; but this Prophet could have no such certainty of the divine revelation which was made to another, especially when it came immediately to contradict that which was so specially enjoined him. 2. Where God commands a Prophet to doe any thing in the pursuit of his message, there he can have no ground to question whether God should countermand it or no by another Prophet; because that was in effect to thwart the whole design of his message. So it was in this action of the Prophet; for God intended his not eating

*Maim. de fun-  
dam. legis, c. 9.  
f. 4. V. Abar-  
binel de Cereth.  
apud Buxtorf.  
de spons. & di-  
vort. p. 182.  
1 King 13. 9.  
Ver. 18.*



*eating and drinking in Bethel to testifie how much he loathed and abominated that place since its being polluted with Idolatry.*  
 3 He might have just cause to question the Integrity of the old Prophet, both because of his living in Bethel, and not openly, according to his office, reproving their Idolatry, and that God should send him out of Judæa upon that very errand, which would not have seemed so probable, if there had been true Prophets resident upon the place. 4. The thing he desired him to do, was not an act of that weight and importance on which God used to send his Word to any Prophets, much less by one Prophet to contradict what he had said by another, and therefore Tertullian saith of him, *pœnam deserti De jejuniis, jejunii luit*, God punished him for breaking his Fast at Bethel; cap. 16. and therefore that message of this Prophet seemed to gratifie more mans carnal appetite, than usually the actions of Prophets did, which were most times matters of hardship and uneasiness to the flesh. 5. However all these were, yet he yielded too soon, especially having so much reason on his side as he had; being well assured that God had commanded him, he had reason to see some clear evidence of a countermand, before he altered his mind: if he had seen any thing upon tryal which might have staggered his faith, he ought to have made his immediate recourse to God by prayer for the settlement of his mind and removal of this great temptation. But so easily to hearken to the words of a lying Prophet, which contradicted his own message, argued either great unbelief as to his own commission, or too great easiness and inadvertency in being drawn aside by the old Prophet. And therefore God made that old Prophet himself in the midst of his entertainment, as with a hand-writing against the wall to tell him he was weighed in the balance and found too light, and therefore his life should be taken from him. Thus we see how dangerous a thing it was either to counterfeit a Spirit of Prophecy, or to hearken to those who did.

It is the generally received opinion among the Jewish Doctors, that the cognizance and tryal of false Prophets did peculiarly belong to the great Sanhedrin. And that this was one end of its institution. So Maimonides after he hath largely discoursed of the punishment of a seducer, and speaking of that of a false Prophet, he lays this down as a standing rule among them  
 ואין רגין נביא השקר אלא בבר של צנ

Seet. 2.

*De Idololat. c. 5. f. 11.*

Jer. 26. 8.

Ver. 10.

V. Grot. in 1. &amp;

Selden. de Syn.

l. 2. c. 15. f. 4.

&amp; l. 3. c. 6. f. 4.

Jer. 26. 16.

Jer. 38. 5.

Luk. 13. 33.

Matth. 23. 70.

Matth. 26. 59.

Matth. 26. 63.

Sect. 4.

was to be judged but in the Court of seventy one ; which was the number of the great Sanhedrin. And there is some thing looks very like this in the proceedings of the people of Israel against the Prophet Jeremiah ; for the people, the Priests and the Prophets, they laid hold on him ; and immediately after we read that the Princes of Judah (by whom Grotius understands the Senators of the great Sanhedrin) they came up from the Kings house to the house of the Lord, and sat down in the entry of the new gate of the Lords house ; (which probably was the place where the great Sanhedrin sat) where after a particular examination of Jeremiah, they acquit him as a person not worthy to die upon a counterfeiting Prophecy, but declare that he spake unto them in the name of the Lord. And in this sense Grotius likewise understands what is said of Zedekiah concerning Jeremiah to the Princes of Judah afterwards, Behold he is in your hand ; for the King is not he that can do ought against you ; i. e. saith Grotius, in manibus Synedrui ejus est judicare de Propheta vero aut falso. And to this many make those words of our Saviour refer, that it is impossible a Prophet should perish out of Jerusalem, because the seat of the great Sanhedrin was in Jerusalem ; and so elsewhere our Saviour saith, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee ; because there it was the true Prophets were destroyed as though they had been false ones, and Gods own messengers punished with the death of seducers, which was lapidation. And on this very account many are of opinion that our Saviour was condemned by the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem ; which is supposed to have been assembled in the house of Caiaphas the High Priest, when Christ was carried thither for examination ; which some think to have been at his lodgings in the Temple, others at his Palace in the City. For we read that the Chief Priests, and the Elders, and all the Council were met together at the High Priest's Palace in order to our Saviours tryal. The next morning they were met early together again in order to the further scanning of this business ; but they seem not to examine Christ concerning a true spirit of Prophecy, but concerning his being the Messiah, and calling himself the Son of God, and so they would seem rather to proceed upon the Law against blasphemy, than that against false Prophets.

But that which was the greatest security of the people against



gainst the imposture of false Prophets, was the certain rules of judging them which were laid down in the *Law of Moses*; Which may be comprehended under these two heads, such as concern their doctrine, or such as concern their predictions. First, such as concerned the Prophets doctrine, which should especially be looked after, because the main office of a Prophet was to be *interpretes & internuncius divinæ voluntatis*, to be a revealer of God's will to men. For the primary notion of a Prophet doth not lie in foretelling future events, but in declaring and interpreting to the world the mind of God which he receives by immediate revelation from himself. So that the receiving what he makes known by immediate revelation, is that which formally constitutes a Prophet; but it is wholly extrinsecal and accidental what time his Prophecy respects, whether past, present, or to come; but because future contingencies are the furthest out of the reach of humane understanding, therefore the predictions of such have been chiefly looked on as the chief note and Character of a Prophet, as being apprehended to be the strongest evidence of Divine revelation. And from hence it is in Scripture that the Patriarchs as Abraham and others are called Prophets, not because of any predictions uttered by them, but because of the frequency of immediate Divine revelations among them. And hence likewise those in the New Testament who expounded the Scriptures, by immediate inspiration are called Prophets; and this was the ἀποκάλυψις spoken of by the Apostle, the exposition of the hidden mysteries of the Old Testament by an immediate inspiration. And there is no word in the Hebrew for a Prophet, which may not equally respect all differences of time, but every one doth import immediate inspiration; for נביא properly is one qui revelat abscondita; ראה a Seer chiefly respects the clear representation of the intellectual species by the lumen propheticum to the understanding, and חזה carries an equal indifferency to all circumstances of times.

Psal. 105. 15.  
Gen. 20. 7.

1 Cor. 14. 26.

Vid. Alstedii  
Trisol. propk.  
p. 53.

Secl. 5.

This being then the chief notion of a Prophet, whatever he declared as the mind and will of God, must be searched and examined, to see what consonancy it hath thereto. For the question which Moses supposeth, is founded upon clear and evident reason, And if thou shalt say in thine heart, How shall we know the Word which the Lord hath not spoken? For it being plain that there

Deut. 18. 22.

there may be *false Prophets* as well as *true*, we had need of some certain *rules* to judge of what is delivered for *divine revelation*. For the clearing of which *important question*, I lay down these *principles*.

1. *The immediate dictates of natural light are no sufficient standard to judge of divine revelation by.* I mean not in reference to *consonancy* or *repugnancy* to *natural light*, but in reference to the *extent* and *latitude* of *divine revelation*, i. e. that *natural light* doth not contain in it whatever may be *known* of *God* or of his *Will*; and that upon these reasons: 1. It implies no *repugnancy* to any *dictate* of *nature*, that *God* should reveal any thing more of his *mind* and *will*, than is contained in the *light of nature*. 2. *Nature* reacheth, as to *matters* concerning *religion*, no further than the *obligation* to *duty*, but leaves the *particular determination* of the *manner* of *obedience* to *divine positive Laws*, as is clear in reference to the *time*, *place*, and *particular duties* of *worship*. 3. *Nature* owning an *universal obligation* to the *will* of *God* in whatever he shall *command*, doth suppose a *power* in *God* to *command* what he *pleaseth*. 4. *Nature* is *sensible* of its own *decays*, and the *imperfection* of its own *light*, and therefore seems rather to require further *illumination*, than to put any *bar* against it. 5. *Man's happiness* being a *free gift* of *God's*, it stands to the *highest reason* that he should have the *prescribing* of the *conditions* which are in order to it; now these *conditions* being the *results*, not of *God's nature*, but of his *arbitrarious will*, it is impossible that *natural light* could ever reach to the full *discovery* of them. 6. It hath been the *general sense* of all *Nations* in the *world*, that *God* may *reveal* more of his *will* than *nature* can reach unto; which *sense* discovers it self in two things. 1. *Praying* to their several *gods* for *direction*. 2. *Hearkening* after pretended *oracles*, which the *Devil* could never have had that *advantage* of *deceiving* the *world* by, had it not been for this *general sense* of *mankind*, that there wanted some *particular revelation* from *God* to make men *happy*. So then this may be assumed as a *principle*, That *God* may *reveal* more of his *mind* and *will* to *mankind*, than he hath done by the *dictates* of mere *natural light* and *reason*.

2. *Whatever speaks a direct repugnancy to any of the fundamental dictates of nature, cannot be of divine revelation.* For those being founded, not upon any *positive* or *arbitrary will*, but upon



on those inward impressions which are derived from the divine nature its self, it cannot in reason be supposed that God should commission any to enervate his own fundamental Law; and so by one will to contradict another. *Placitum Regis* must never stand against the *Placita Coronæ*: Those things which depend upon fundamental and established Laws, hold good against any positive sentence or declaration of a Prince's will; Because he is supposed to have bound up himself by the established Laws; and therefore any thing else which comes from him, contrary to them, is supposed not to be the will of the Prince, but of the persons persuading him to it. But this now cannot be supposed in God, that he should be any ways drawn to cassate the obligation of what is imprinted upon the souls of men as his own Law. But yet we must distinguish between nulling the general obligation, and altering the particular nature of any thing which depends upon that general Law; the first in any case is impossible, that any divine revelation should make it not to be mans duty to obey his maker, or not to be a sin to commit murder, to lye, or to steal from another; but there may come a particular revelation from God to alter the respects and nature of such things as do immediately depend upon his own dominion; as the lives of persons and the properties of things are; and thus God did reveal to Abraham that he should go and sacrifice his son, which had been no murder when done upon God's immediate command, and for a sacrifice to himself, and therefore would have been acceptable as a testimony of entire obedience (which God did accept without the act) and so the Israelites taking the Egyptians Jewels, and dispossessing the Canaanites, did depend upon God's immediate disposal of these things to them; which otherwise had been a sin in them, and no doubt was so to any that were unsatisfied whether God had immediately commanded it or no. Or from hence to infer any general rule, is no doubt a breach of divine commands, and contrary to his nature and will.

Where God hath established a positive Law, prescribing a form and manner wherein he will be worshipped, it is sufficient evidence of a false Prophet, to go about to null the obligation of that Law; unless there be as great evidences given, that God did intend the establishing a new Law by that person, as he did at first the institution of the old by the hand of Moses. This latter clause is

inserted, to shew that the *succeeding* of the doctrine of *Christ*, into the place of the *Law* of *Moses*, doth not bear any *repugnancy* to the *Hypothesis* laid down, there being greater *evidences* of *God's* intending the *abolishing* the *ceremonial Law* by the *Gospel* of *Christ*, than there were of the *establishment* of it by *Moses*. But of those afterwards. I now only speak of such as upon the mere *pretence* of *divine revelation*, should *destroy* any *precept* of an *established positive Law*; and this, as far as we can find, was the great *rule* the *Jews* went by; if any thing were *spoken* by any *Prophet*, contrary to the *Law* of *Moses*, or tending to the *alteration* of the *worship* of *God* established thereby, he was accounted a *false Prophet*. The modern *Jews* to justify themselves in their own *unbelief*, as to the doctrine of *Christ*, extend this further than the *Law* doth; for they *enlarge* it to all the *precepts* of the *ceremonial Law*; whereas *God* in the *Law* seems to limit it to the *Moral Law*, and chiefly insists on the three first precepts of the *Decalogue*; and therefore condemns such a one as *spake* in the name of the *Lord*, when he had not commanded them, Deut. 18. 20. and such as *endeavoured* to bring in *idolatry*, Deut. 13. 1, 2, 3. where though the *false Prophet* should offer to do *signs* and *wonders* before them, yet if his *intention* were to draw them to *worship* *false Gods*, they were not to hearken unto him. And therefore *Maimonides*, where he largely disputes about the *truth* of *prophecies*, lays this down as a certain rule : *Si Propheta surrexerit, atque magna miracula aut prodigia fecerit & adlaboraverit falsitatis convincere Prophetiam Moſis M. N. istum non audimus, quia certò novimus prodigium præſtigiis aut incantationibus productum eſſe*, as *Vorſtius* renders him. If a *Prophet* do never so great miracles, and seeks to convince *Moses* of *falsehood*, we are not to hearken to him; for we know that they are not done by the power of *God*, but by the *illusions* of the *Devil*. And elsewhere he tells us, that if any one pretends to prophesy וְשֵׁם עֲנִיִּים in the name of *Idols*, they must not so much as dispute with him, nor answer him, nor desire any *signs* or *miracles* from him; and if of himself he shews any, we are not to regard or mind them; for, saith he, whoever doth but doubt in his mind concerning them, he breaks that command, and thou shalt not hearken to the words of that *Prophet*. So that the doctrine once established, ought to be our most certain rule, according to which we must

judge

*Defundam. leg.*  
c. 8. f. 7.

*De Idololat.*  
c. 5. f. 9.

*Deut.* 13. 3.



judge of all *pretenders to miracles*, if their *design* be to draw men off from God's Word, we are not to hearken to what they either say or do.

*The doctrine of those Prophets who seek not to introduce Idolatry, must not be measured by a strict conformity to the words of Moses his law, but to the main reason and intention of it. The great reason of this is, because God did not intend the Jews should always rest in the Pedagogy of the Ceremonial Law, but sent them Prophets to train them up by degrees, and to fit them for a state of greater perfection; and therefore it would be very unreasonable to judge whether they were true Prophets or no, exactly by that which they came gradually to wear them from; which were all one, as to try one whether he were grown a man or no, by the swaddling clouts he wore when he was a child. God tempered the Ceremonial Law much according to the condition and capacity of the persons it was prescribed to, and therefore the sanctions of it did immediately respect their temporary concerns; but we are not to think the end of that dispensation was to be merely a Covenant for the Land of Promise; but as the Cherubims in the Temple did always look towards the Mercy-seat, so did this whole Oeconomy look towards the coming of the Messiah. But it was with the generality of the Jews, as it is with Ignorant people, who looking up to the heavens, cannot fancies the stars to be any bigger than they seem to them; but Astronomers by the help of their Optick tubes and Telescopes, do easily discern the just magnitude of them; so the Jews ordinarily thought there was no more in those types and shadows, than was visibly represented to them; but such as had the help of the Divine Spirit (the best Telescope to discern the day-star from on high with) could easily look through those prospectives, into the most glorious mysteries of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. These types being like triangular Prisms, that must be set in a due light and posture, before they can represent that great variety of spiritual mysteries which was contained in them. Now the great office of the Prophets was to administer this light to the people, and to direct them in those excellent pieces of Perspective, wherein by the help of a Prophetick glass, they might see the Son of God fully represented to their view. Besides this, the Prophetical office was a kind of Chancery to the Mosaick Law,*

4.  
Sect. 8.

Pfal. 50. 8.

51. 16.

Isa. 1. 11, 13.

66. 3.

Jer. 7. 21, 22,

23.

1 King. 18. 38.

Vid. Tarchi in

Deut. 18. 21.

Et Vorst. ad

Maim. de fund.

2. 9. f. 5, 6, 7.

wherein the *Prophets* did interpret the *Pandects* of the *Law* *ex æquo & bono*, and frequently shewed in what *cases* God did *dispense* with the outward *letter* of it, to *exalt* the more the *inward sense* and *reason* of it. Hence the *Prophets* seem many times to speak *contemptibly* of the outward *prescribed* *ceremonies*, when their *intent* is not to *condemn* the *observation* of them, but to tell the people there were greater *things* which God looked at, than the outward *observation* of some *Ceremonial precepts*, and that God would never accept of that by way of *commutation*, for *real* and *internal goodness*. Hence the *Prophets* by their own *practice*, did frequently shew that the *Law* of *Moses* did not so *indispensibly oblige* men, but that God would accept of those *actions* which were performed without the *regularity* required by the *Law* of *Moses*; and thus he did of *sacrificing* upon *high places*, not only before the building of the *Temple*, but sometimes after, as he accepted of the *sacrifice* of *Elijah* on *Mount Carmel*, even when *high places* were forbidden. Which the *Jews* are become so sensible of, that they grant that a *true Prophet* may sometimes *command* something to be done in *violation* of the *Law* of *Moses*, so he doth not draw people to *Idolatry*, nor destroy the obligation of *Moses* his *Law*. But this they restrain to *לפי שעה* something done in *case of necessity*, and that it should not pass into a *precedent* or a *perpetual Law*; and therefore their rule is *לפי שעה שומענו לו בכל*. The *Prophet* was to be hearkened to in every thing he commanded in a *case of necessity*. But by this it is clear that the *Prophets* were not to be tried by the *letter* of the *Law* of *Moses*, but by the *end* and the *reason* of it. Thus much I suppose will make it clear what *rules* the people had to try the *Prophets doctrine* by, without *miracles*.



## C H A P. VI.

## The Tryal of Prophetical Predictions and Miracles.

The great difficulty of the trying the truth of prophetical Predictions from Jer. 18. 7, 8, &c. Some general Hypotheses premised for the clearing of it. The first concerns the grounds why Predictions are accounted an evidence of divine revelation. Three Consecratories drawn thence. The second, the manner of God's revelation of his will to the minds of the Prophets. Of the several degrees of prophecy. The third is, that God did not always reveal the internal purposes of his will unto the true Prophets. The grand question propounded, How it may be known when Predictions express God's decrees, and when only the series of causes. For the first several rules laid down. 1. When the prediction is confirmed by a present miracle. 2. When the things foretold exceed the probability of second causes. 3. When confirmed by God's oath. 4. When the blessings foretold are purely spiritual. Three rules for interpreting the prophecies which respect the state of things under the Gospel. 5. When all circumstances are foretold. 6. When many Prophets in several ages agree in the same predictions. Predictions do not express God's unalterable purposes, when they only contain comminations of judgments, or are predictions of temporal blessings. The case of the Ninevites, Hezekiah, and others, opened. Of repentance in God, what it implies. The Jewish objections about predictions of temporal blessings answered. In what cases miracles were expected from the Prophets: when they were to confirm the truth of their religion. Instanced in the Prophet at Bethel, Elijah, Elisha and Moses himself; whose divine authority that it was proved by miracles, is demonstrated against the modern Jews, and their pretences answered.

THE next thing which the rules of tryal concerned, was the predictions of the Prophets. Concerning which God himself hath laid down this general rule, Deut. 18. 22. *When a Prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not,*

*Ans. 1.*

*nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the Prophet hath spoken it presumptuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him. Grotius understands this place of the Prophet's telling the people he would doe some miracles to confirm his doctrine; but, saith he, if those miracles were not done as he said, it was an evident demonstration of a false prophet. It is certain it was so; for then his own mouth told him he was a lying prophet; but these words seem to refer, rather to something future than present, and are therefore generally understood concerning the truth of predictions; which was a matter of very difficult tryal, in regard of the goodness or the justice of God so frequently interposing between the prediction and the event. That place which makes it so difficult to discern the truth of a prediction by the event, is Jer. 18. 7, 8, 9, 10. At what instant I shall speak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and destroy it; If that Nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from evil, I will repent of the evil I had thought to doe unto them; And at what instant I shall speak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it doe evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then will I repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them. By which place it seems clear, that even after the predictions of Prophets, God doth reserve a liberty to himself, either to repent of the evil or the good that was foretold concerning any people; how then can the fidelity of a Prophet be discovered by the event, when God may alter the event, and yet the Prophet be a true Prophet? This being a case very intricate and obscure, will call for the more diligence in the unfolding of it: In order to which, we shall first premise some general Hypotheses, and then come to the particular resolution of it. The general Hypotheses will be concerning the way and method of God's revealing future contingencies to the Prophets, without which it will be impossible to resolve the particular emergent cases concerning predictions.*

SECT. 2.

1 Hypoth.

*The prediction of future events is no further an argument of a prophetick Spirit, than as the fore-knowledge of those things is supposed to be out of the reach of any created understanding, and therefore God challengeth this to himself in Scripture, as a peculiar prerogative of his own, to declare the things that are to come, and thereby manifests the Idols of the Gentiles to be no Gods, because*



because they could not shew to their worshippers the things to come ;  
Isa. 44. 6, 7. From this Hypothesis these three Confectaries follow :

1. That the events which are foretold , must be such as do exceed the reach of any created intellect ; for otherwise it could be no evidence of a Spirit of true Prophecy ; so that the foretelling of such events as depend upon a series of natural causes , or such as though they are out of the reach of humane understanding , yet are not of the diabolical , or such things as fall out casually true , but by no certain grounds of prediction , can none of them be any argument of a Spirit of Prophecy.

2. That where there were any other evidences , that the Prophet spake by Divine Revelation ; there was no reason to wait the fulfilling of every particular Prophecy before he was believed as a Prophet. If so , then many of God's chiefest Prophets could not have been believed in their own Generations ; because their Prophecies did reach so far beyond them , as Isaiah's concerning Cyrus , the Prophet at Bethel concerning Josias : and all the Prophecies concerning the captivity and deliverance from it , must not have been believed till fulfilled , that is , not believed at all : for when Prophecies are accomplished , they are no longer the objects of faith , but of sense. Where then God gives other evidences of Divine inspiration , the credit of the Prophet is not suspended upon the minute accomplishment of every event foretold by him. Now it is evident there may be particular Divine revelation of other things besides future contingencies , so that if a reason may be given , why events once foretold may not come to pass , there can be no reason why the credit of any Prophecy should be invalidated on that account ; because every event is not exactly correspondent to the prediction. It is most certain that whatever comes under divine knowledge , may be divinely revealed ; for the manifestation which is caused by any light , may extend it self to all things to which that light is extended : but that light which the Prophet saw by was a divine light , and therefore might equally extend it self to all kind of objects ; but because future contingencies are the most remote from humane knowledge , therefore the foretelling of these hath been accounted the great evidence of a true Prophet ; but yet there may be a knowledge of other things in a lower degree than future contingencies , which may immediately depend upon divine revelation ; and these are,

1. Such

1. *Such things which cannot be known by one particular man, but yet are certainly known by other men ; as the present knowledge of things done by persons at a remote distance from them : thus Elifha knew what Gehazi did, when he followed Naaman ; and thus the knowledge of the thoughts of another's heart depends upon immediate divine revelation, whereas every one may certainly know the thoughts of his own heart ; and therefore to some those things may be matters of sense or evident demonstration, which to another may be a matter of immediate revelation.*

2 King. 5. 26.

1 Cor. 14. 25.

2. *Such things as relate not to future contingencies, but are matters of faith exceeding the reach of humane apprehension ; such things as may be known when revealed, but could never have been found out without immediate revelation ; such all the mysteries of our religion are, the mystery of the Trinity, Incarnation, Hypostatical union, the Death of the Son of God for the pardon of the sins of mankind. Now the immediate revelation of either of these two sorts of objects speaks as much a truly Prophetical spirit as the prediction of future contingencies. So that this must not be looked on as the just and adequate rule to measure a spirit of Prophecy by ; because the ground of judging a Prophetical spirit by that, is common with other things without that, seeing other objects are out of the reach of humane understanding as well as future events, and therefore the discovery of them must immediately flow from divine revelation.*

3. *The revelation of future events to the understanding of a Prophet, is never the less immediate, although the event may not be correspondent to the prediction. So that if it be manifest that God immediately reveal such future contingencies to a Prophet, he would be nevertheless a true Prophet whether those predictions took effect or no. For a true Prophet is known by the truth of divine revelation to the person of the Prophet, and not by the success of the thing, which, as is laid down in the hypothesis, is no further an evidence of a true Prophet, than as it is an argument à posteriori to prove divine revelation by. If then the alteration of events after predictions be reconcilable with the truth and faithfulness of God, there is no question but it is with the truth of a Prophetical spirit, the formality of which lies in immediate revelation.*



*The Prophets could not declare any thing more to the people than was immediately revealed unto themselves. What was presently revealed, so much they knew, and no more, because the spirit of Prophecy came upon them per modum impressionis trans-euntis, as the Schools speak, and not per modum habitus; the lumen propheticum was in them, not as lumen in corpore lucido, but as lumen in aëre; and therefore the light of revelation in their spirits depended upon the immediate irradiations of the Divine spirit. The Prophets had not always a power to prophesie when they would themselves; and thence it is said, when they prophesied, that the Word of the Lord came unto them. And therefore the Schools determine, that a Prophet upon an immediate revelation did not know omnia prophetabilia (as they speak in their barbarous language) all things which God might reveal; the reason whereof Aquinas thus gives; the ground,* <sup>2. 2. q. 171. art. 2.---4.</sup> *saith he, of the connexion of divers objects together is some common tie or principle which joyns them together; as charity or prudence is in moral virtues; and the right understanding of the principles of a science, is the ground why all things belonging to that science are understood; but now in Divine revelation, that which connects the objects of Divine revelation is God himself; now, because he cannot be fully apprehended by any humane intellect, therefore the understanding of a Prophet cannot comprehend all matters capable of being revealed, but only such as it pleaseth God himself freely to communicate to the Prophet's understanding by immediate revelation. This is further evident by all those different degrees of illumination and prophecy which the Jews and other Writers speak so much of, viz. of dreams and visions, the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, the gradus Mosaicus, the external voice, &c. Now in every one of these degrees the Prophet could go no further than his present revelation extended; and therefore Aquinas determines, That the understandings of the Prophets were instrumenta deficiencia respectu principalis agentis,* <sup>2. 2. q. 173. art. 3.</sup> *i. e. that in prophetic illumination the mind of the Prophet was so moved by the Spirit of God, as an instrument in the hand of an Artificer, which bears no proportion with the skill of the workman: And therefore the mind of a Prophet is moved sometimes only to apprehend the thing represented (which they call instinctus Divinus, of which they say a Prophet may have no certainty whether it comes from God or no) some-*  

Z times

*Seet. 3.*

*2. Hypoth.*

times it is moved so far as to know certainly that this revelation is from God (this they call *lumen propheticum*;) sometimes a Prophet may be moved to speak those things which he fully understands; so it was with most of the true Prophets; but sometimes men may be moved to speak that which they understand not, as is plain in Caiaphas, and probable in Balaam. Sometimes a thing was represented to the fancy of one without any possibility of understanding the meaning of those imaginary species, as in Pharaoh's and Nebuchadnezzar's dreams; and to another may be given the true judgment of those motions of fancy without the representation of the things to them, as in Joseph and Daniel. Now in these and many other different impressions of this prophetic spirit, the Prophets, to whom the things were revealed, could go no further than the degree of the revelation made to them did extend.

Sect. 4.  
3. Hypoth.

God did not always reveal to the Prophets the internal counsels and decrees of his own will, but often only the method and series of his providence in the administration of things in the world. Which is the ground of that threefold distinction of Prophecy in the Schools, into *Prophetia prædestinationis*, *Prophetia præscientiæ*, and *Prophetia comminationis*; which is taken from the ordinary gloss upon *Matth. 1.* where they are thus explained; the Prophecy of predestination is, when the event depends wholly upon God's will, without any respect to ours, as the Prophecy of the Incarnation of Christ; the Prophecy of Prescience is of such things as depend upon the liberty of man's will; and the Prophecy of Commination only denotes God's denunciations of heavy judgments against a people. But Aquinas doth better reduce the two former to one, and so the ground of the difference is to be fetched from the different ways whereby God knows things in the World; which is either as they are in their causes, and so they note the order and series of things in the world, with the mutual respects and dependencies they have one upon another, and this refers to God's administration of things in the world; or else God looks upon them as they are in themselves, or according to his own positive determinations of them; and now in this sense they are unalterable; but in the other they are not; but God may alter those respects of things when he pleaseth. Now though this different manner of knowledge can never be conceived separate from one another in the Divine understanding,



derstanding, yet in the revelation made to the mind of a Prophet, they may be disjoyned from each other, because God doth not always reveal things in the highest degree to the Prophets; for no free Agent doth always act as far as he can. And therefore propheticall revelation is sometimes a representation of God's internal decrees, and then they always take effect; and sometimes only the order of causes and effects, and they may admit of an alteration, and the Prophecy nevertheless be true, because then it referred only to the series of causes in the world according to which the events would follow if God himself did not interpose. These things being thus premised, we come to particular resolutions, which must arise from the evidences that may be given when propheticall predictions did express God's internal purpose and decree, and when only the order of the causes in the world; for in these latter it is apparent that events might not answer predictions, and yet the Prophet be a true Prophet: which is a matter of greater difficulty, viz. to find out the exact differences of these two, till the event hath made it apparent which came from God's unalterable purpose, and which not. But though it be a subject little spoken to either by Jewish or Christian Writers, yet we are in hopes there may be some such clear notes of distinction discovered between them, even a priori, which may sufficiently clear God's faithfulness, and the Prophet's truth, though the event be not always correspondent to the words of a prediction.

I begin then with the evidences that may be given when predictions do flow from internal purpose and decree.

Seet. 5.

Every prediction confirmed by a present miracle, doth not express merely the order of causes, but the determinations of God's will, because there can be no sufficient reason given why the order of causes in nature should be altered to express the dependences of things on each other; for herein a miracle would rather tend to weaken than strengthen faith, because the end of the miracle would be to confirm their faith as to events following upon their causes; but now the medium used for that end seems to prove the contrary, viz. That God can alter the series of causes when he pleases himself, by working miracles, and therein going contrary to the course of nature; and therefore a miracle seems to be a very incongruous argument in this, because its self is an evidence that may be, which it comes to prove shall

I.

not be. But when *Prophets* come to declare the *internal purposes* of the *will* of *God* concerning *future contingencies*, no argument can be more *suitable* to *demonstrate* the *truth* of what is spoken, than the *working* of a *present miracle*, for this demonstrates to the senses of men, that however *unlikely* the event may be to them which is *foretold*, yet with *God* all things are *possible*, and that it is very *unlikely* *God* would send such a *messenger* to declare a *falsehood*, whom he *entrusted* with so great a *power* as that of *working miracles*. Thus it was in that *remarkable Prophecy* concerning *Josias* by the *man of*

1 King. 13. 3.

*God* at *Berbel*, 260 years before his *birth*, which though it were to come to pass so long after, *God* confirmed it by a *sign*, which was the *renting* of the *Altar*, and the *pouring out* of the *ashes* upon it, and the *withering* of *Jeroboam's hand*. We cannot therefore in reason think that *God* would set so clear a *seal* to any deed which he did intend himself to *cancel* afterward.

2

*Predictions* express *God's inward purpose*, when the things foretold do exceed all probabilities of *second causes*; in which case though those words of *Tertullian* seem very harsh, *credo quia impossibile*: yet taking that *impossibility* as relating to *second causes*, and the ground of *faith* to be some *divine prediction*, we see what reason there may be for them: For the more *unlikely* the thing is to be effected by *second causes*, the greater evidence is it, that the *Prophets* in foretelling it did not respect the mere order of things in the world, but the *unalterable counsels* of the *will* of *God*, which therefore would certainly have their *timely accomplishments*. When therefore any *Prophets* did foretell things above the reach of *natural causes*, and those things did not come to pass, it was a certain evidence of a *false Prophet*, as the contrary was of a *true one*; for none could know so long before-hand such things as were above all *humane power*, but such to whom *God* himself, who alone was able to effect them, did reveal and communicate the knowledge of them. And hence we see in *Scripture* those predictions which have seemed to carry the greatest *improbabilities* with them, have had the most *punctual accomplishments*, as the *Israelites* returning out of *Aegypt* at the end of the 430 years; their *deliverance* by *Cyrus* after the *captivity* in *Babylon*, which seemed so improbable a thing, that when *God* speaks of it, he ushers it in with this Preface, *That he frustrate the tokens of the lyers, and maketh*

Gal. 3. 17.

Ila. 44. 25, 26,  
28.

the



the deviners mad, but confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers, that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited, &c. The more unlikely then the thing was to come to pass, the greater evidence there was in so clear a prophecy of it so long before (above 100 years) and so exact a fulfilling of it afterwards precisely at the expiring of the LXX years from the first Captivity.

Predictions concerning future events, which are confirmed by an oath from God himself, do express the immutable determinations of God's will. For which we have the greatest assurance we can desire from that remarkable expression of the Apostle to the Hebrews, Heb. 6. 17, 18. *Wherein God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lye, we might have a strong consolation, &c. Wherein the Apostle obviates and removes all doubts and misprisions, lest God after the declaring of his will should alter the event foretold in it, and that he doth, both by shewing that God hath made an absolute promise, and withal to prevent all doubts, lest some tacite condition might hinder performance, he tells us that God had annexed his oath to it, which two things were the most undoubted evidences of the immutability of God's counsel.* The word *ῥέσις*, here used, doth in Scripture often note the frustrating of mens hopes and expectations; so it is used, *Hab. 3. 17. ῥέσεται ἔργον ἐλαίας*, we render it the labour of the Olive shall fail. So *Hos. 9. 2. καὶ ὁ οἶνος τῆς αἰνῆς αὐτῆς*, and the new wine shall fail in her. Thus the meaning here is, that by two immutable things in which it is impossible that God should frustrate the expectations of men, or alter the events of things after he had declared them. For God's oath is an evident demonstration of the immutability of his will in all predictions to which this is annexed, and doth fully exclude that which the Scripture calls repenting in God, that is, doing otherwise than the words did seem to express, because of some tacite conditions understood in them. So we find *Psal. 89. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36. If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail; my Covenant will I not break; nor alter the thing that is*  
gone

Seet. 6.  
3.

gone out of lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lye unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the Sun before me. Wherein we see what way God takes to assure us of the immutability of his Covenant with his people, by the oath which he adjoyns to his promises; whereby God doth most fully express the unalterable determinations of his own will, in that he swears by his own holiness that he would not lye unto David, i. e. that he would faithfully perform what he had promised to him. And therefore Tertullian well saith, *Beati sumus quorum causa Deus jurat, sed miseri & detestabiles si ne juranti quidem credimus*. It is happy for us believing creatures, that God stoops so low as to confirm his Covenant with an oath; but it will be sad and miserable for such as dare not venture their faith upon it, when God hath annexed his oath unto it. It is thought by expositors, that there is a peculiar emphasis in those words, *אמר נשבעתי* Once have I sworn, thereby noting the irrevocable nature of God's oath, that there is no need of repetition of it as among men, because when once God swears by himself it is the highest demonstration that no conditions whatever shall alter his declared purpose. And therefore the Council of Toledo well explains the different nature of God's Oath and his repentance in Scriptures; *Jurare namque Dei est à se ordinata nullatenus convellere; penitere vero eadem ordinata cum voluerit immutare*; God is said to swear when he binds himself absolutely to performance: and to repent, when things fall out contrary to the declaration of God's will concerning them; for so it must be understood to be only *mutatio sententiæ*, and not *consilii*, that the alteration may be only in the things, and not in the eternal purpose of God. But since it is evident in Scripture, that many predictions do imply some tacite conditions, and many declarations of God's will do not express his internal purposes, it seemed necessary in those things which God did declare to be the irrevocable purposes of his will, there should be some peculiar mark and character set upon them for the confirmation of his peoples faith, and this we find to be the annexing an oath to his promises. Thus it is in that grand Instrument of Peace between God and his people, the Covenant of Grace, wherein God was pleased so far to strengthen the faith of his people in it, that he ratifies the articles of peace therein contained, but especially the Act of Grace,

on

Conc. Tolet. 3.

c. 2.



on his own part with an *oath*, thereby to *assure* them it was never his purpose to *repeal* it, nor to *fail* of *performance* in it. For we are not to think that an *Oath* lays any greater *obligation* upon *God* for *performance*, than the mere *declaration* of his *will*; it being a part of *immutable justice*, and consequently *necessarily implied* in the *Divine nature* to perform *promises* when once made; but *God's Oath* respects us and not *himself*, viz. that it might be a *testimony* unto us that *God's will* thereby declared, is his *eternal and unchangeable will*, and so the *mercies* thereby *promised* are *sure mercies*; such as are ἀμεταμέλητα without any *repentance* on *God's* part. Isa. 55. 3.

*Predictions made by the Prophets concerning blessings merely spiritual, do express God's internal purpose, and therefore must have their certain accomplishment in the time prefixed by the Prophets.* The grand reason of this Proposition, is, that the bestowing of *blessings* merely *spiritual*, doth immediately flow from the *grace and favour* of *God*, and depend not upon *conditions* on our part, as *procuring causes* of them, and therefore there can be no *account* given why *God* should *suspend* the *performance* of such *promises*, which would not more *strongly* have held why he should not have *made* any such *promises* at all. And therefore when we see that *notwithstanding* the *highest demerits*, *God* made such *free promises*, we can have no *reason* to think that any other *demerits* *interposing* between the *promises* and *performance*, should hinder the *accomplishment* of them: unless it be *inserted* in the *promises* themselves, which is *contrary* to the *nature* of *free promises*: Upon this ground all the *promises* relating to the *Gospel state*; and to the *Covenant* of *grace* therein contained, must have their *due accomplishment* in the *time* and *manner* prefixed by the *Prophets*: and therefore the *Jews* are miserably *blind* when they *suppose* the *reason* why the *promise* of the *Messias* is yet *deferred* after so long *expectation* of him, is, the *sins* of their *people*; for this seems to *suppose* that *God's promise* of the *Messias* did depend upon their *own righteousness* and *worthiness* above all other *people*, which if it doth, they are like to be the most *miserable* and *desperate people* the world hath: and besides, if *God's intuition* of *sin* makes him *defer* the coming of the *Messias*, his *foresight* of *sin* would have *hindered* him from

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4.

Dan. 9. 24.

from ever promising a *Messias* to come: but this was so far from being a hindrance of God's promise, that the main end of the coming of the *Messias* was to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to make an end of sin, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. And we see where-ever the Prophets insist on the Covenant of grace, the great promise contained in it is the blotting out of transgressions, and remembering sins no more, and that merely on the account of God's free love and for his own name's sake: This can be no reason then why predictions concerning spiritual blessings should not have their exact accomplishment, because there can be no bar against free Love, and the bestowing of such mercies which do suppose the greatest unworthiness of them, as Gospel blessings do.

Sect. 8.

The great difficulty lies in explaining the Prophetical phrases concerning the Gospel state, which seem to intimate a greater advancement and flourishing of peace and holiness therein, than hath as yet been seen in the Christian world; which gives the Jews the greater occasion to imagine that the state so much spoken of by the Prophets, is not yet established in the world. But all the difficulty herein ariseth from the want of consideration of the Idiotisms of the Prophetical language, especially where it respects the state of things under the Gospel, concerning which, we may observe these following rules.

1.

The Prophets under the Old Testament, when they speak of things to come to pass in the New, do set them forth by the representation of such things as were then in use among themselves; thus the spiritual worship of the Gospel is prophesied of, under the notion of the legal worship among the Jews; the conversion of Egypt to the Gospel, is foretold Isaiah 19. 19, 21. by the setting up of an Altar, and offering sacrifice to the Lord; and the Conversion of the Gentiles in general, by the offering up of incense, Mal. 1. 11. and the service of God under the Gospel, is set forth by going up to Jerusalem, and keeping the feast of Tabernacles there, Zach 14. 16 and the plentiful effusion of the spirit of God in the miraculous gifts which attended the preaching of the Gospel, is set forth by the Prophet, Joel 2. 28. by Propheying, and dreaming dreams, and seeing visions; not that these things should really be under Gospel times; but that the Prophets meaning might be the better understood by those he spake unto, he sets forth the great  
measure



*measure of gifts and Gospel light under those things which were accounted as the highest attainments among themselves. So the great measure and degree of holiness which was to be under Gospel times, is set forth by the Prophet Zachary, Zach. 14. 20. by the placing of the motto which was among the Jews only upon the High Priest's forehead, that this should be so common under the Gospel, that even the bells of the horses should bear it, i. e. those things which seem most remote from a spiritual use, should be devoted to it, as the bells were, which were commonly banged upon their war-horses in those mountainous Countries; and in the latter part of that verse, the height and progress of Gospel holiness is described under that phrase, that the pots in the Lords house should be as bowls before the Altar, i. e. should be advanced from a lower and more ignoble service, to a higher and more spiritual degree of holiness. Now the Jews when they observe these and many other Prophetical passages relating to the time of the Messiah to run in the old strain of the Law, they presently conclude that the Messiah must not innovate any thing concerning their way of worship, but only be some great Prince to give them temporal deliverances, and so expound all these texts in a literal sense, which were only expressed in such a strain, the better to help the capacities of those they spake them to.*

*Things absolutely foretold to come to pass in Gospel times in a general manner, are to be understood comparatively in reference to what was before. For when the measure of either grace or knowledge was so far above what was then among the Jews, that there was scarce any proportion between them, the Prophets made use of such expressions to set it forth by, which might raise up the dull apprehension of the Jews to conceive the just measure and fulness of it. Thus when the Prophets fore-tell the grand increase of spiritual knowledge in Gospel times, they do it in this phrase, they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me from the least to the greatest, Jer. 31. 33. Where it was far from the Prophet's meaning to exclude all use of teaching under the Gospel, (which is contrary to the end of all the Ordinances of the Gospel) but because teaching doth commonly suppose great Ignorance, he sets forth the abundance of knowledge which should be then, by the exclusion of that*

which doth *imply* it. So when it is said that *they shall all be taught of God*, the meaning is not, that every one that *lives* in the Gospel state, should be thus effectually taught by the Spirit of God; but that the *number* of such under the Gospel, should so far exceed those under the Law, that they could hardly apprehend the disproportion between them, unless it had been set forth in so large an expression. Which leads me to the next rule.

3.

Things foretold as universally or indefinitely to come to pass under the Gospel, are to be understood as to the duty of all, but as to the event only of God's chosen people. Thus when there is so great peace prophesied to be in Gospel times, that then men should beat their swords into plow-shares, and spears into pruning-hooks; that the Wolf should lie down with the Lamb, and Leopard with the Kid; that Nation should not lift up sword against Nation, nor learn war any more; with many others to the same purpose; all these speeches are to be understood of what the nature and design of the Gospel tends to, and what is the duty of all that profess it, and what would effectually be in the Christian world, did all that profess the Christian doctrine, heartily obey the dictates of it; and so far as the Gospel doth prevail upon any, it so far cures their wild and unruly natures, that of furious Wolves they become innocent Lambs, and of raging Lions, tender Kids; so far from hurting and injuring others, that they dare not entertain any thoughts of ill will or revenge towards their greatest enemies. And thus we may see, that notwithstanding the seeming repugnancies of the Prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the state of the New, with the events which have been observed in it, yet that all those predictions which concerned the bestowing of the spiritual blessings which concerned the Gospel state, have had their punctual accomplishment in the sense they were intended.

Isa. 2. 4.

Isa. 6, 7.

Sect. 9.

4.

Predictions concerning future events where not only the thing its self is foretold but the several circumstances of persons, time, and place enumerated, are to have their due accomplishment, and consequently express God's inward purposes. For those promises or comminations which are capable of alteration by some tacite conditions implied in them, do most commonly run in general terms; or else are spoken by way of immediate address



address to the persons concerned in order to the stirring them up the more to the duty God aims at by those *comminations*; as when *Jonas* limited the *Ninevites* destruction to forty days. But when *Prophecies* are recorded, not by way of *commination* but mere *prediction*, and particular *circumstances* set down, it stands to reason that such *Prophecies* must have their certain *accomplishment*; and that first, because God by setting down the *circumstances* would give them greater evidences that the *predictions* came from himself; as when the Prophet at *Bethel* not only foretold the destruction of the *Altar* there, but particularly named the man that should do it, viz. *Josias*. So when God by *Isaiah* called *Cyrus* by name, it was doubtless a great confirmation to them, that the deliverance of the *Jews*, should be by that person. Secondly, because these *circumstances* are intended for *Landmarks* to know the certainty of the accomplishment of the *Prophecy*. For when they find the *circumstances* fall out exactly according to *prediction*, they have no ground to question the accomplishment of the substance of the *Prophecy*. And hence it was that in the grand *Prophecy* of the coming of the *Messias* all particular *circumstances* were so long before foretold. The first dawning of his day being to *Adam* after his fall, when the nature he should be born of was foretold, viz. not *Angelical* but *humane*, of the seed of the woman. To *Abraham* it was further revealed of what *Nation* of mankind, viz. from his posterity; to *Jacob* at what time, when the *Scepter* should be departed from *Judah*; and from what tribe, viz. *Judah*; to *David* of what Family in that tribe, viz. his own; to *Isaiah* of what Person in that Family, a *Virgin*; to *Micah* in what place, viz. *Bethlehem*; and to *Daniel*, at what precise time, toward the expiring of his seventy weeks; which according to the most probable computation of them did commence from the seventh year of *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, and so the 490 years expired near upon our Saviour's passion. Now certainly the particular enumeration of all these circumstances spoken of so long before, and falling out so exactly, could not but give the greatest conviction and evidence, that our blessed Saviour was that person so much spoken of by the Prophets, in whom all these several lines did meet as in their center.

5.

Lastly, *Predictions then express divine purposes when many Prophets in several ages concur in the same predictions*; because it is hardly seen but all those *tacite conditions* which are supposed in general *promises* or *comminations* may be altered in different ages; but when the *conditions* alter, and the *predictions* continue the same, it is a stronger evidence it is some *immutable counsel* of God which is expressed in those *predictions*. And in this case one *prediction* confirms the foregoing, as the Jews say of *Prophets*; One *Prophet* that hath the testimony of another *Prophet*, is supposed to be true; but it must be with this supposition, that the other *Prophet* was before approved to be a true *Prophet*. Now both these meet in the *Prophecies* concerning our *Saviour*; for to him bear all the *Prophets* witness; and in their several ages they had several things revealed to them concerning him; and the *uniformity* and *perfect harmony* of all these several *Prophecies* by persons at so great distance from each other, and being of several interests and employments, and in several places, yet all giving light to each other, and exactly meeting at last in the accomplishment, do give us yet a further and clearer evidence that all those several beams came from the same Sun, when all those scattered rays were at last gathered into one body again at the appearance of the Sun of righteousness in the world.

Sect. 10.

Thus have we now cleared when *predictions* are expressive of God's internal purposes; by observation of which rules we may easily resolve the other part of the difficulty when they only express the series and dependencies of things which would have their issue and accomplishment if God by his immediate hand of providence did not cut off the entail of effects upon their natural causes. Now as to these *Prophecies* which concern things considered in themselves, and not precisely as they are in the counsel of God, we are to observe these rules.

1. *Comminations* of judgments to come do not in themselves speak the absolute futurity of the event, but do only declare what the persons to whom they are made are to expect, and what shall certainly come to pass, unless God by his mercy interpose between the threatening and the event. So that *comminations* do speak only the *debitum pœnæ* and the necessary obligation to punishment; but



but therein God doth not bind up himself as he doth in absolute promises; the reason is because comminations confer no right to any, which absolute promises do; and therefore God is not bound to necessary performance of what he threatens. Indeed the guilt, or obligation to punishment is necessary, where the offence hath been committed to which the threatening was annexed; but the execution of that punishment doth still depend upon God's arbitrary will, and therefore he may suspend or remove it upon serious addresses made to himself in order to it. For since God was pleased not to take the present forfeiture of the first grand transgression, but made such a relaxation of that penal Law, that conditions of pardon were admittable, notwithstanding sentence passed upon the malefactors, there is strong ground of presumption in humane nature that God's forbearance of mankind notwithstanding sin, doth suppose his readiness to pardon offenders upon their repentance, and therefore that all particular threatnings of judgments to come do suppose incorrigibleness in those they are pronounced against: Upon which the foundation of hope is built, that if timely repentance do intervene, God will remove those judgments which are threatened against them.

And this was certainly the case of the Ninevites upon Jonas his preaching among them. For when the threatening was so peremptory, *Yet forty days, and Nineve shall be destroyed*, all the hope they could have of pardon must be from the general persuasions of men's souls of God's readiness to remove judgments upon repentance. For otherwise there had been no place for any thing but despair, and not the least encouragement to supplicate the mercy of God, which we see they did in a most solemn manner after they were convinced these comminations came from God himself by the mouth of his Prophet. Some think that Jonas together with the threatening of judgment did intermix exhortations to repentance; but we can find no probability at all for that on these two accounts; first, Jonas then would not have been so unwilling to have undertaken this message; for as far as we can see, the harshness of it was the main reason he sought to have avoided it by flying to Tarshish. Secondly, Jonas would have had no pretence at all for his anger and displeasure at God's pardoning Nineve; which is most probably conceived to have been, because the Ninevites might

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Jonah 3. 4.

now.

Jonah 4. 2.

now *suspect* him to be no true Prophet, because the event answered not his *prediction*. Now there had been no reason at all for this, if he had mixed *promises* together with his *threatnings*; for then *nothing* would have fallen out *contrary* to his own *predictions*. And therefore it seems evident that the *message* *Jonas* was sent with, was only the *commination* of their speedy *ruine*, which God did on purpose to awaken them the sooner, and with the greater earnestness to repentance, when the judgment was denounced in so *peremptory* a manner; although it seems *Jonas* had before such apprehensions of the mercifull nature of God and his readiness to pardon, that he might suppose God's intention by this severe denunciation of judgment, might be only to take occasion upon their repentance to shew his goodness and bounty to them. But this was no part of his instructions, which he durst not go beyond in his preaching, whatever his private opinion might be; for the Prophets were to utter no more in their preaching or particular messages than was in their commission, and were not to mix their own words with the Word of the Lord.

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Isa. 38. 1.

Vates, l. i. c. 6.

And by this we may further understand the denunciation of death to *Hezekiah* by the Prophet *Isaiah*, *Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die and not live*. I question not but the Prophet revealed to *Hezekiah* as much as God had revealed to him (for to say as *Molinæus* doth, that the Prophet spake these words of his own head, before he fully understood God's mind, is very harsh and incongruous) but God might at first discover to *Isaiah* not his internal purpose, but what the nature of the disease would bring him to (unless his own immediate hand of providence interposed) which message he would have *Isaiah* carry to *Hezekiah* for the tryal of his faith, and exciting him to the more lively acts of grace, and for a further demonstration of God's goodness to him in prolonging his life beyond humane probability and the course of second causes. Now what repugnancy is there to the truth and faithfulness of God, that God should conceal from his Prophets in their messages the internal purposes of his will, and in order to the doing good to men should only reveal what would certainly have come to pass unless himself had otherwise determined it. And thus the repentance which is attributed to God in reference to these denunciations of judgments, is far from importing any real mutation in the



the *internal purposes* of God (a rock some have split themselves upon) but it only signifies the outward *changing* of the Scene towards *men*, and *acting* otherwise than the *words* of the *Prophets* did seem to *import*; and all the *alteration* is in the outward discovery of his will, which is certainly far from being any *collusion* in God: Unless we must suppose God so bound up, that he hath no liberty of using his own *methods* for bringing men to *repentance*, or for *tryal* of his *peoples* *graces*, but must in every instance of his *Word* declare nothing but his own *internal purposes*, which is contrary to the general *method* of God's dealing with the *world*, which is, to *govern* men by his own *Laws*, and thereby to *awaken* them to *duty*, and *deter* from *sin* by his annexed *threatnings*, without revealing any thing of his *internal purposes* concerning the *state* and *condition* of any particular *persons* at all; which *threatnings* of his, though pronounced with the greatest severity, do not speak God's *inward resolutions* as to any particular *person*, but what all must expect if they continue *impenitent* and *incorrigible*. For the only condition implied in these *threatnings* being *repentance*, it necessarily follows, that where that is *wanting*, these *hypothetical comminations* are *absolute predictions* of what shall certainly come to pass on all those who are destitute of the *condition* supposed in them.

So that where any *comminations* are pronounced by any in a *prophetical way* concerning any person or people, and no *alteration* happen at all in them, but they continue *impenitent* and *incorrigible*, there the not coming of them to pass may be a token of a *false Prophet*. For in this case the only *tacite condition* implied in these *threatning Prophecies* is supposed to be *wanting*, and so the *comminations* must be understood as *absolute predictions*: Now in those *comminations* in *Scripture*, which are *absolutely expressed*, but *conditionally understood*, we find something *interposing*, which we may rationally suppose was the very *condition understood*. As *Abimelech's* restoring of *Sarah* was the ground why the *sentence* of death after it was denounced, was not executed upon him: So *Abah's* *humiliation*, *Hezekiah* his earnest prayer, the *Ninevites* *repentance*, all *interposed* between *sentence* and *execution*, whereby we may be fully satisfied of the *reason* why these *denunciations* did not take effect: But where the persons continue the same after

Sect. 12.

Gen. 20. 7.

1 King. 21. 19.

threat-

*De fund. legis,*  
*cap. 10. f. 6.*

*threatnings* that they were before, there is no reason why the sentence should be suspended, unless we should suppose it to be a mere effect of the patience and long-suffering of God, leading men to repentance and amendment of life : Which is the ground the Jews give, why the not fulfilling of denunciations of judgment was never accounted sufficient to prove a man a false Prophet ; to which purpose these words of Maimonides are observable in his *Jesude Thorah*, where he treats particularly on the subject of Prophecies : If a Prophet foretell sad things, as the death of any one, or famine, or war, or the like ; if these things come not to pass, he shall not be accounted a false Prophet ; neither let them say, Behold he hath foretold, and it comes not to pass ; for our blessed God is slow to anger, and rich in mercy, and repenteth of the evil ; and it may be that they repent, and God may spare them, as he did the Ninevites, or deferr the punishment, as he did Hezekiah's. Thus we see that propheticall comminations do not expresse God's internal purposes, and therefore the event may not come to pass, and yet the Prophet be a true Prophet.

*Seet. 14.*

2. Predictions concerning temporal blessings, do not always absolutely speak the certainty of the event, but what God is ready to doe, if they to whom they are made continue faithfull to him : For which we have sufficient ground from that place of *Jeremiah* 18. 9, 10. At what instant I shall speak concerning a Kingdom, to build and to plant it ; if it doe evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then will I repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them. So *Isaiah* 1. 19, 20. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the Land ; but if ye refuse and rebell, ye shall be devoured with the sword ; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Whereby we see it evident, that all promises of temporal blessings are not to be taken absolutely, but with the condition of obedience. But this the Jews can by no means digest, whose rule is, that all prophecies of good things to come must necessarily come to pass, or he was no true Prophet who spake them : For, saith Maimon. Whatever good thing God hath promised, although it be promised under a condition, he never revokes it ; and we never find that God repented him of any good thing promised, but in the destruction of the first Temple, when God had promised to the righteous, they should not die with the wicked ; but he repented him of his words. But  
it

*Ibid. f. 7, 8.*



it is very plain to any one that considers the *Jewish Interpretations of Scripture*, that in them they have always an eye to themselves, and will be sure not to *understand* those *Scriptures* which seem to *thwart* their own *interest*, as is most apparent in the *present case*; for the *grand reason* why the *Jews* insist so much on the *punctual accomplishment* of all *promises* of good to be the *sign* of a *true Prophet* is, to *uphold* their own *interest* in those *temporal blessings* which are *prophefied* of concerning them in the *old Testament*; although one would think the *want* of *correspondency* in the *event* in reference to themselves, might make them a little more *tender* of the *honour* of those *Prophecies* which they acknowledge to be *divine*; and have appeared to be so in nothing more than the full *accomplishment* of all those *threatnings* which are *denounced* against them for their *disobedience*, even by the mouth of *Moses* himself, *Deut.* 28. from the 15th. to the end. Can any thing be more *plain* and *evident*, than that the *enjoyment* of all the *privileges* conferred upon them, did depend upon the *condition* of their *continuing faithful* to *God's Covenant*? The only place of *Scripture* produced by them with any *plausibility* is that, *Jer.* 28. 9. *The Prophet which prophefieth of peace, when the word of the Prophet shall come to pass, then shall the Prophet be known that the Lord hath truly sent him.* For reconciling of which place with those already mentioned, we are to *understand* that here was a *particular contest* between two *Prophets*, *Hananiah* and *Jeremiah*; *Jeremiah* he foretold *evil* to come, though unwillingly, *v.* 6. *Hananiah* he *prophefied* *peace*. Now *Jeremiah*, according to *God's peculiar directions* and *inspiration*, appeals to the *event* to determine whose *Prophecy* was the *truest*: Now, saith *Jeremiah*, if the *Prophecy* of *Hananiah* concerning *peace* be fulfilled, then he is the *true Prophet*, and I the *false*. And in this case when two *Prophets* *prophefie* *contrary things*, it stands to reason that *God* will not *reveal* any thing by the mouth of his own *Prophet* which shall not infallibly come to pass, that thereby the *truth* of his own *Prophet* may be fully *manifested*. Besides, *Jeremiah* refers not merely to the *event* foretold, but gives a sudden specimen of his own *truth* in another *Prophecy* concerning the death of *Hananiah*, which was punctually accomplished the same year, *ver.* 17. And which is most considerable to our purpose, both these *Prophets* considered the same *people* under the same

*circumstances, and with the same conditions ; and so Jeremiah, because of their incorrigibleness, foretels desolation certainly to come ; notwithstanding this, Hananiah foretels peace and safety, which was contrary directly to God's method of proceeding, and so the falsity of his Prophecy would infallibly be discovered by the event. So that notwithstanding this instance it appears evident, that predictions of temporal blessings do suppose conditions, and so have not always the event fulfilled, when the people do not perform their condition of obedience. And thus we have now laid down the rules whereby the truth of Prophecies was to be judged ; by which it appears what little need the constant Prophets had to appeal to miracles to manifest the certainty of Divine revelation in them. So we have finished our first proposition concerning the manner of trying Divine revelation in the Prophets God sent among his people.*

*Seet. 15.*

*2. Prop.*

We now come to the second general proposition concerning the Prophets. *Those Prophets whom God did employ upon some extraordinary message for confirming the truth of the religion established by him, had a power of miracles conferr'd upon them in order to that end. So that we must distinguish the ordinary employment of Prophets which was either instruction or prediction of future events among God's own people, from their peculiar messages when they were sent to give evidence to the truth of that way of religion which was then settled by God's own appointment. Now the Prophets generally did suppose the truth of their religion as owned by those they were sent to, and therefore it had been very needless, employing a power of miracles among them to convince them of that which they believed already. For we never read among all the revolts of the people of the Jews that they were lapsed so far as totally to reject the Law of Moses, ( which had been, to alter the constitution of their Commonwealth ) although they did enormously offend against the Precepts of it, and that in those things wherein the honour of God was mainly concerned, as is most plain in their frequent and gross Idolatry : Which we are not so to understand as though they wholly cast off the worship of the true God, but they superinduced ( as the Samaritans did ) the worship of Heathen Idols with that of the God of Israel. But when the revolt grew so great and dangerous that it was ready to swallow up the true worship of God, unless some apparent evidence*  
were



were given of the *falsity* of those *Heathen mixtures*, and further *confirmation* of the *truth* of the *established religion*, it pleased *God* sometimes to send his *Prophets* on this *peculiar message* to the main *instruments* of this *revolt* : as is most conspicuous in that dangerous *design* of *Jeroboam*, when he out of a *Politick end* set up his *two calves* in *opposition* to the *Temple* at *Jerusalem* ; and therein it was the more dangerous in that in all *probability* he designed not the *alteration* of the *worship* it self, but the *establishment* of it in *Dan* and *Bethel*. For his *interest* lay not in drawing of the *people* from the *worship* of *God*, but from his *worship* at *Jerusalem*, which was contrary to his *design* of *Cantonizing* the *Kingdom*, and taking the greatest *share* to himself. Now that *God* might confirm his *peoples faith* in this dangerous *juncture* of *time*, he sends a *Prophet* to *Bethel*, who by the *working* of present *miracles* there, *viz.* the *renting* the *Altar* and *withering* of *Jeroboam's hand*, did manifest to them that these *Altars* were *displeasing* to *God*, and that the true *place* of *worship* was at *Jerusalem*. So in that famous *fire-Ordeal* for trying the *truth* of *religion* between *God* and *Baal* upon *mount Carmel* by *Elijah*, *God* was pleased in a *miraculous way* to give the most *pregnant testimony* to the *truth* of his own *worship*, by causing a *fire* to come down from *heaven* and *consume* the *sacrifice*, by which the *Priests* of *Baal* were confounded and the *people* confirmed in the *belief* of the *only true God* : for presently upon the *sight* of this *miracle* the *people* fall on their *faces* and say, *the Lord he is God, the Lord he is God*. Whereby we plainly see what *clear evidence* is given to the *truth* of that *religion* which is *attested* with a *power* of *miracles*. Thus the *widow* of *Sarepta* which was in the *Country* of *Zidon*, was brought to *believe* *Elijah* to be a *true Prophet* by his raising up her *son* to *life*. And the *woman* said to *Elijah*, *Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord by thy mouth is truth*. So we see how *Naaman* was convinced of the *true God* by his *miraculous cure* in *Jordan* by the *appointment* of *Elisha*, *Behold now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel* ; by which instances it is *demonstrable* that either the *faith* of all these *persons* was built upon *weak* and *insufficient grounds*, or that a *power* of *miracles* is an *evident confirmation* of the *truth* of that *religion* which is *established* by them. For this we see was the great

1 King. 12. 27.

1 King. 13. 2.

1 King. 18. 38.

1 King. 18. 39.

1 King. 17. 24.

2 King. 5. 15.

end for which God did imploy any of his Prophets to work miracles, viz. to be as an evident demonstration of the truth of what was revealed by him. So that this power of miracles is not merely a motive of credibility, or a probable inducement to remove prejudice from the person, as many of our Divines speak, but it doth contain an evident demonstration to common sense of the truth of that religion which is confirmed by them.

Sect. 16.

And thus we assert it to have been in the case of Moses, the truth of whose message was attested both among the Egyptians and the Israelites by that power of miracles which he had. But herein we have the great Patrons of Moses our greatest enemies, viz. the present Jews; who by reason of their enmity to the doctrine of Christ which was attested by unparallel'd miracles, are grown very shy of the argument drawn from thence: Inasmuch that their great Dr. Maimonides lays down this for a confident maxime

De fund. legu,  
c. 8. f. 1.

משה רבנו לא האמין בו ישראל מפני האותות; The Israelites did not believe in Moses our Master for the sake of the Miracles which he wrought. Did they not? the more shame for them: and if they did, the more shame for this great Rabbi thus to belye them. But the reason he gives for it is, because there may remain some suspicion in ones mind, that all miracles may be wrought by a power of Magick or Incantation: Say ye so? what, when Moses confounded all the Magicians in Egypt, and made themselves who were the most cunning in these things confess it was the finger of God, and at last give out as not able to stand before Moses? might one still suspect all this to be done by a Magical power?

Albo. l. 1. c. 18.

Credat Judæus Apella, non ego. This is much like what another of their Doctors says, whom they call the Divine Philosopher, that Elisha his raising the child to life, and curing Naaman's leprosie; and Daniel's escaping the Lions, and Jonas out of the whale's belly, might all come to pass by the influence of the stars, or by Pythonism. Very probable! but it is most true which G. Vortius there observes of the Jews, nihil non nugacissimi mortalium fingunt ne cogantur agnoscere virtute ac digito quasi ipsius Dei. Jesum nostrum effecisse miracula sua. All their design in this is, only to elevate the miracles of our blessed Saviour, and to derogate all they can from the belief of them. Hence they tell us that, nothing is so easie to be done as miracles; the mere recital of the Tetragrammaton will

work



work wonders, and that by this *Jeremiah* and our Saviour did all their miracles : It is well yet that he did no more than one of their own *Prophets* had done before him ; but where I wonder do we read that ever the pronouncing of four letters raised one from the dead who had lain four days in the grave : or by what power did *Christ* raise himself from the dead ; (which was the greatest miracle of all) could his dead body pronounce the *Tetragrammaton* to awaken its self with ? But *Maimonides* further tells us, that the miracles which *Moses* wrought among the *Israelites* were merely for necessity, and not to prove the truth of his *Divine commission*, for which he instanceth in dividing the red sea, the raining of *Manna*, and the destruction of *Corah* and his complices. But setting aside that these two latter were the immediate hand of God , and not miracles done by *Moses*, yet it is evident that the intent of them was to manifest a *Divine presence* among them : and in the t:yal of *Corah* *Moses* appeals to God's immediate Providence to manifest whether God had immediately employed him or no. For it is evident by the text that the main charge they laid against *Moses* was ambition and usurpation ; *Is it a small thing, say they, that thou hast brought us up out of a Land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thy self altogether a Prince over us ?* Whereby it is evident they thought that *Moses* acted out of a private design, and aimed at his own honour and authority ; which was an imputation of the highest nature that could be alledged against him. Now see how *Moses* proceeds to clear himself, (which is sufficient to stop the mouths of these incredulous Jews) for he lays the greatest evidence of his *Divine commission* upon a present miracle. And *Moses* said, *Hereby shall ye know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works ; for I have not done them of mine own mind ; If these men die the common death of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me, &c.* Can any thing be more plain than that the only intent of this miracle was to make it appear that *Moses* took not his office upon him, but was immediately sent and employed by God in what he did. But that which will put an end to this controversy is God's giving *Moses* a power to work miracles for that very end that the *Israelites* should believe him, *Exodus*, 8. 8, 9. And can we think they would have ever left *Egypt*

Numb. 16. 13.

V. 28, 29.

Exod. 19. 9.

as they did and followed *Moses* into the *wilderness*, unless they had been fully convinced he was a deliverer sent from God : It is true (that which the *Jews* speak so much of) the *statio in monte Sina* was a great confirmation both to their own faith and to *Moses* his, according to what God had told him, *Exod. 3. 12.* but yet it follows not hence they had no firm bottom for their faith to stand on before (for then they might have been drowned in the red sea as well as the *Egyptians*) but God knowing their incredulity and readiness to disobey his Law, did at the promulgation of it testify to their eyes and ears his own presence in the midst of them. And this certainly was one of the greatest miracles of all : and therefore to oppose this to the evidence that is produced by miracles is only to oppose a power of working miracles to a power of doing them. So vain and empty then, so false and fallacious, yea so directly contrary to holy Scripture is that Axiome of the *Jews*, *Prophetiae veritas non confirmatur miraculis* : for miracles are sufficient evidences of Divine revelation in any whom God imployes, to all but such as are resolved not to believe them ; and as one well saith, *Pertinaciae nullum remedium posuit Deus* ; God never works miracles to convince obstinate Atheists and wilful Infidels. This now is the first case wherein miracles are to be expected, which is, when God imployes any upon an extraordinary message, to be as Credentials to confirm their Divine commission.

C H A P.



## C H A P. VII.

The eternity of the Law of *Moses* discussed.

*The second case wherein miracles may be expected, when a Divine positive Law is to be repealed, and another way of worship established instead of it. The possibility in general of a repeal of a Divine Law asserted; the particular case of the Law of Moses disputed against the Jews: the matter of that Law proved not to be immutably obligatory; because the ceremonial precepts were required not for themselves, but for some further end; that proved from Maimonides his confession: the precepts of the Ceremonial Law frequently dispensed with while the Law was in force. Of the passover of Hezekiah, and several other instances. It is not inconsistent with the wisdom of God to repeal such an established Law. Abravanel's arguments answered. Of the perfection of the Law of Moses, compared with the Gospel. Whether God hath ever declared he would never repeal the Law of Moses. Of adding to the precepts. Of the expressions seeming to imply the perpetuity of the Law of Moses. Reasons assigned why those expressions are used, though perpetuity be not implied. The Law of Moses not built upon immutable reason, because many particular precepts were founded upon particular occasions, as the customs of the Zabii; many ceremonial precepts thence deduced out of Maimonides; and because such a state of things was foretold, with which the observation of the Ceremonial Law would be inconsistent. That largely discovered from the Prophecies of the old Testament.*

**I** Now come to the *second case* wherein miracles may be justly expected, which is, when something which hath been before established by Divine Law, is to be repealed, and some other way of worship to be set up instead of it. Two things are very necessary to be spoken to for the clearing of this proposition; first, whether a Law once established by God himself be capable of a repeal; Secondly, What necessity there is of miracles to manifest God's intention of repealing a former Law. These two contain the main foundation of the dispute between the

Sect. I.

the Jews and us, viz. whether the Law of Moses was ever to be laid aside, and whether the miracles of our blessed Saviour were sufficient evidences of God's intention by him to repeal the former Law established by Moses? I begin with the first, whether a Divine Law in general or the Law of Moses in particular may be abrogated or repealed, after God himself hath made it evident that the promulgation of it was from himself. This must be confessed the strongest and most plausible plea the present Jews have for their Infidelity, and therefore the eternity of the Law of Moses is made by them one of the fundamental articles of their present Creed, and is pleaded for with the greatest subtilty by their great R. Abravanel, who spends his whole 13 Chapter *de capite fidei* upon it, but with what success, will be seen in our clearing of it. There are but three things can be supposed as the grounds why a Law once promulged by God himself, should not be capable of repeal; and those are either first, because the things themselves commanded in that Law are of such a nature, that they are not capable of being dispensed with: Or secondly, that it is not consistent with the wisdom of God to repeal a Law once established: Or thirdly, that the reason of the Law continuing always the same, it would argue mutability in God to revoke that Law, and establish another instead of it: If we can therefore demonstrate, that the matter of the Law of Moses is of a positive and mutable nature, that it is suitable to the wisdom of God to alter it, and that sufficient account in reason may be given for the alteration of it, Then there can be no imaginable necessity that a Law once having God for its Author, must therefore derive from him an eternal and immutable obligation.

Sett. 2.

First then as to the matter of the Law; and here it must be supposed, that in the matter of controversy between us and the Jews, the question is not of any of those things which are therefore commanded, because they are intrinsically good, as the precepts of the natural or moral Law; but of those things which are therefore only good, because God commands them, i. e. things merely positive, whose worth and value ariseth not from the intrinsic weight of the things, but from the external impress of divine authority upon them. Now it is no question on either hand whether God may require these things or no; nor whether these things will be acceptable unto God, so long



long as he *requires* them ; but whether, when once *required*, the *obligation* to them can never cease. Such kind of *things* among the *Jews* we suppose all the *rites* and *ceremonies* of the *Law* to be ; viz. *circumcision*, *distinction* of *meats* and *days*, *customs* of *sacrificing*, and such like, and whatever other *Laws* respected them as a *distinct* and *peculiar* *Common-wealth*. All these we say are such as do not carry an *immutable obligation* along with them ; and that on these accounts.

First, *Because these things are not primarily required for themselves, but in order to some further end.* Things that are required upon their own account, carry an *indispensable obligation* in them to their performance ; but where things are *commanded* not for themselves, but the *Legislator* doth express some particular grounds of requiring them, there the *end* and *intention* of the *Legislator* is the *measure* of their *obligation*. To which purpose *Maimonides* excellently speaks, when he saith, *That* I. More Nechoh. p. 3. c. 32.  
*the particular manner of worship among the Jews, as sacrifices and oblations, were secundum intentionem secundam Dei, God's secondary intention and design ; but prayer, invocation, and the like, were nearer God's primary intention : Now, saith he, for the first, they are no further acceptable to God, than as all the circumstances of time, place, and persons are observed, which are prescribed by God himself ; but the latter are acceptable in any person, time, or place. And for this cause, saith he, it is that we find the Prophets often reproving men for their too great sedulity in bringing oblations, and inculcating this to them, that God did not intend these as the principal instances of his worship, and that God did not need any of these things. So*  
*I Sam. 15. 22. Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams : Isa. 1. 11. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me ? saith the Lord. And especially Jerem. 7. 22, 23. For I spake not to your Fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings ; but this thing I commanded them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people. Of which words Maimonides saith, Scrupulum moverunt omnibus, quos mihi videre aut audire contigit ; For say they, How can it be that God did not command them concerning sacrifices, when a great part of the Law is about them : But Maimonides well resolves the doubt thus, That God's primary intention, and that which*

he chiefly looked at, was obedience ; but God's intention in sacrifices and oblations, was only to teach them the chief thing, which was obedience. This then is of the number of those things which are spoken absolutely, but to be understood comparatively, as, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice. My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. It is not you that speak, but the Holy Ghost, &c.* So that we see all the goodness which is in these things, is conveyed into them by that which is morally good, which is obedience ; and God did never regard the performance of those Laws any further than as it was an expression of obedience, and it was conjoined with those other moral duties which were most agreeable to the Divine nature. And in this sense many understood that difficult place, Ezek. 20. 25. *And I gave them חקִים טוֹבִים statutes that were not good, i. e. say they, comparatively with these things which were simply and in themselves good ; to which purpose they give this rule, Aliquid negatur inesse alicui, quod alterius comparatione existimatur exiguum.* But I rather think that which the Chaldee Paraphrast suggests, and others explain further, to be the meaning of that place, viz. that by the precepts that were not good, is meant the cruel and tyrannical impositions of those enemies God for their sins did deliver them over to, which were far from being acceptable to them, which is frequently the sense of good in Scripture. Thus we see one reason why the ceremonial precepts do not in themselves imply an immutable obligation, because they are not commanded for themselves, but in order to a further end.

Sect. 3. Because God hath frequently dispensed with the ceremonial

2. precepts when they were in greatest force, if the end of them could be attained without them. Thus the precept of circumcision slept during the Israelites travels in the wilderness. Thus David ate of the shew-bread, which is expressly forbidden in the Law ; the Jews think to evade this by distinguishing between the bread of confession in the Eucharistical offering mentioned Leviticus 7. 13. and the proper shew-bread : Now they say David eat only of the first, and not of the second ; but this is glossa Aurelianusensis, which overthrows the Text ; for it is expressly said, that the ground why the Priest gave him holy bread, was because there was none there but לחם הפנים, the shew-bread, 1 Sam. 21. 6. A like violation of the Law without reproof, is commonly supposed by the Jews to have

Exod. 29. 33.



have been in the siege of *Jericho*, viz. in the case of the *Sabbath*. But it is more plain in that *Anamalous Passover* observed by *Hezekiah*, which many of the *Jews* themselves acknowledge was not observed as the *second Passover* provided by the *Law* to be celebrated on the 14 day of the second month by those who were debarred of the first for their legal uncleanness; but they suppose it to have been intended for the legal Passover; only because the fourteenth of *Nisan* was passed before the sanctification of the Temple was finished, lest they should celebrate none at all that year, they tell us that *Hezekiah* with the consent of the *Rulers*, did make an *Intercalation* that year of a whole month, and so *Nisan* was reckoned for the second *Adar*, and *Jiar* for *Nisan*, from whence they say that *Hezekiah* did intercalate *Nisan* in *Nisan*, that is, added another *Nisan* to the first. But where do we read any such thing permitted in the *Law* as the celebrating the first Passover the 14th of the second month? But granting that it was observed as a second Passover, because of the want of legal sanctification both in *Priests* and *People*; yet we find great irregularities in the observation of it; for it is expressly said, That a multitude of the people had not cleansed themselves, yet they did eat the Passover otherwise than it was written. And yet it is said upon *Hezekiah's* prayer, that the Lord hearkened to *Hezekiah*, and healed every one. So that we see God himself did dispense with the strict ceremonial precepts of the *Law*, where men did look after the main and substantial parts of the worship God required from them. Nay God himself hath expressly declared his own will to dispense with the ritual and ceremonial *Law*, where it comes to stand in competition with such things as have an internal goodness in them, when he saith, he desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings. Thus we plainly see that the ceremonial *Law*, however positive it was, did yield as to its obligation, when any thing that was moral, stood in competition with it. And so the *Jews* themselves suppose an open violation of the judicial *Law* to have been in the hanging up of *Saul's* sons, a long time together, directly contrary to *Deut.* 21. 23. which they conceive to have been from the 16 of *Nisan* to the 17 of *Marchesvan*, which is as much as from our *March* to *September*, whereas the *Law* saith expressly that the body of one

Numb. 9. 11.

2 Chron. 29. 17.

V. Selden. de Anno civili Jud. cap. 9.

2 Chron. 30. 18.

V. 20.

Hof. 6. 6.

2 Sam. 21. 9, 10.

Not. in Abrav.  
c. 13.

that is hanged shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day. One of the Jewish Rabbies, as G. Verstius tells us, is so troubled at this, that he wisheth that place in Samuel expunged out of Scripture, that the name of God might be sanctified. But whether this were done על פי דברי, by the command of the Oracle or no, or whether only by a general permission, we see it was acceptable unto God; for upon that the Gibeonites famine was removed, and God was intreated for the Land. Thus we have now proved that there is no immutable and indispensable obligation which ariseth from the things themselves.

#### Sect. 4

Rosh. Amanana.  
c. 13.

Secondly, It is no way inconsistent with the wisdom of God to repeal such a Law when once established. The main argument of that learned R. Abravanel, whereby he would establish the eternity of the Law of Moses, is fetched from hence, That this Law was the result of the wisdom of God, who knows the suitableness of things he appoints to the ends he appoints them for; as God hath appointed bread to be the food of mans body: Now we are not to enquire why God hath appointed bread and no other thing to be the food of man; no more, saith he, are we to enquire why God hath appointed this Law rather than another for the food of our souls; but we are to rest contented with the counsels of God, though we understand not the reasons of them. This is the substance of that argument, which he more largely deduceth. To which we answer, that his argument holds good for obedience to all God's positive precepts of what kind or nature soever they be, so long as we know their obligation to continue; but all the question is, whether every positive precept must always continue to oblige. And thus far his similitude will hold good, that whatever God doth command, we are to look upon it to be as necessary to our souls, as bread to our bodies; but hence it follows not that our souls must be always held to the same positive precepts, any more than our bodies to the same kind of food. Nay, as in our bodies we find some kind of food always necessary, but the kind of it to alter according to age, health, and constitutions; so we say some kind of Divine revelation is always necessary; but God is graciously pleased to temper it according to the age and growth of his people; so he fed them as with milk in their non-age, with a ritual and ceremonial Law, and trained them up by



by degrees under the *Nursery* of the *Prophets* till the *Church* was grown to age, and then *God* fed it with the *strong meat* which is contained in *God's* revelation of his will by the *Gospel* of his *Son*. And therein was abundantly seen *God's* πολυποίκια & σοφία, his *variegated wisdom*, that he made choice of such *excellent* and *proportionable ways* to his peoples capacity to prepare them gradually for that full and compleat revelation which was reserved for the time of the appearance of the true *Messias* in the world. For can any thing be more plain than the gradual progress of *Divine* revelation from the beginning of the world? That fair resemblance and portraiture of *God* himself, and his will upon his word (if I may so express it) had its groundwork laid upon man's first *Apostasie*, in the promise made Gen. 3. 15. whereon some further lines were drawn in the times of the *Patriarchs*, but it had its σκιαγραφία, it was shadowed out the most in the typical and ceremonial Law, but was never filled up to the life, nor had its perfect ζωγραφία, till the *Son of God* himself appeared unto the world. If then it be inconsistent with the wisdom of *God* to add any thing to the Law of *Moses*, why not to the revelation made to *Adam* or the *Patriarchs*? or especially to the seven precepts of *Noah*, which they suppose to have been given to all mankind after the flood? If it were not repugnant to the wisdom of *God* to superadd rituals and ceremonials to morals and naturals, why shall it be to take down the Scaffolds of Ceremonies, when *God's* spiritual Temple the *Church* of *God* is come to its full height? Is there not more reason that rituals should give place to substantials, than that such should be super-induced to morals?

There are only two things can be pleaded by the *Jews* why it should be more repugnant to the wisdom of *God* to add to the Law of *Moses*, than to any former revelation, which are the greater perfection they suppose to be in this revelation above others, and that *God* in the promulgation of it did express that he would never alter it. But both these are manifestly defective and insufficient in order to the end for which they are produced. For first, what evidence is there that the Law of *Moses* contained so great perfection in it, as that it was not capable of having any additions made to it by *God* himself? We speak not now of the perfection of the Moral Law, which it is granted contained in it the foundation of all positive precepts; Psal. 19. 10.

Seet. 5.

for.

for this we never contend for the *abrogation* of, but the *ritual Law* is that we meddle with; and is it *possible* any men should be so little befriended by *reason* as to think this to be the *utmost pitch* of what God could reveal to the world as to the way of his own worship? Let any indifferent *rational person* take the *precepts* of the Gospel, and lay them in the *balance* with those of the *Ceremonial Law*, and if he makes any *scruple* of deciding on which side the *over-weight* lies, we may have cause to suspect him forsaken of that little *reason* which gave him the name of man. Let but the fifth of *Matthew* be laid against the whole book of *Leviticus*, and then see whether contains the more *excellent precepts*, and more *suitable* to the *Divine nature*? I speak not this to *disparage* any thing which had once God for the *Author* of it, but to let us see how far God was from the *necessity* of *natural agents* to act to the height of his *strength* in that *discovery* of his *Will*. God is *wise* as well as *righteous* in all his ways; as he can command *nothing* but what was *just*; so he *will* command *nothing* but what is *good*, nay *excellent* in its kind. But though all the *Stars* be in the same *firmament*, yet one star differs from another in *glory*; though they may be all *pearls*, yet some may be more *orient* than others are; every *place* of *holy Scripture* may have its *crown*, but some may have their *aureolæ*, a greater *excellency*, a *fuller* and *larger capacity* than the other hath; every *parcel* of *Divine revelation* may have some *perfection* in its kind, yet there may be some *monstra perfectionis* in *Scaliger's* expression, that may far out-vye the *glory* and *excellency* of the rest. Can we think the *mists* and *umbrages* of the *Law* could ever cast so *glorious a light* as the *Sun* of *righteousness* himself in his *Meridian elevation*? As well may we think a *dark shady passage* more *magnificent* and *glorious* than the most *Princely Palace*, a *picture* drawn in *Charcoal* more *exquisite* and *curious* than the *lines* of *Apelles*, some *imperfect rudiments* more *exact* and *accurate* than the most *elaborate work*, as go about to compare the *Law* of *Moses* with the *Gospel* of *Jesus Christ* in point of *excellency* and *perfection*. Let the *Jews* then boast never so much of their *gradus Mosaicus*, and how much it exceeds the *degree* of *revelation* in other *Prophets*, we know if his *light* be compared with what the *Gospel* communicates, *Moses* himself saw but as in a *glass* darkly, and not in *speculo lucido*,



*lucido*, as the *Jews* are wont to speak. We honour *Moses* much, but we have learnt to honour him at whose transfiguration he was present more; neither can that be thought any disparagement to him who accounted the reproach of *Christ* greater riches than the treasures of *Agypt*.

But it may be, though the Law in its self be not so absolutely perfect, yet God may have declared he will never alter it, and then it is not consistent with Divine wisdom to repeal it. Very true: God will never alter what he hath said he will not; but where is it that he hath thus bound up himself? Is it in that noted place to this purpose, *Thou shalt not add thereto nor diminish from it*? So indeed *Maimonides* argues; but therein more like a *Jew* than himself; and yet one of his own Nation therein far more ingenuous than he, gives a most sufficient answer to it, which is *R. Jos. Albo*, whose words are thus produced by *Vorstius* and others; the Scripture only admonisheth us, that we should not add to nor diminish from God's commands according to our own wills; but what binders, saith he but God himself may according to his own wisdom add or diminish what he pleaseth? But are they in good earnest when they say God bound up himself by this speech? whence came then all the Prophetical revelations among the *Jews*? did these add nothing to the Law of *Moses*, which was as much the will of God when revealed by them, as any thing was revealed by *Moses* himself? or will they say that all those things were contained for the substance in the Law of *Moses*, as to what concerned Practice? Very true; but not in the Ceremonial, but the Moral Law; and so we shall not stick to grant that the whole duty of man may be reduced to that. But if adding to the precepts be the doing of God's commands in another way than he hath prescribed, and diminishing from them be merely not to do what God hath commanded, as some conceive, then these words are still more remote from the sense affixed on them by the incredulous *Jews*. For why may not God himself add to his own Laws or alter the form of them, although we are always bound directly to follow God's declared will? May not God enlarge his own will, and bring his Scholars from the rudiments of their nonage to the higher knowledge of those who are full-grown? or must the world of necessity do that which the old *Roman* so much abhorred, *senescere in elementis*, wax

Sect. 6.

Deut. 12. 32.  
De fund leg. c. 9.  
f. 1. Ikkarim.  
l. 3. c. 14.

gray in learning this *A, B, C*? or was the *Ceremonial Law* like the *China Characters*, that the world might spend its age in conning of them? But it appears that there was no other meaning in that strict prohibition, than that men should not of their own heads offer to find out new ways of worship as *Jeroboam* did, but that God's revelation of his own will in all its different degrees was to be the adequate rule of the way and parts of his own worship. And I would fain know of the *Jews* whether their own severe and strict prohibitions of things not at all forbidden in the *Law of God*, and that on a religious account, as סייג לתורה a boundary to the *Law*, come not nearer the adding to God's *Law*, than God's own further declaration of his will doth? All the dispute then must be, not whether God may add to his own *Law*, but whether the *Gospel* be a prohibited addition to the *Law of Moses*, that is, whether it be only the invention of men, or it be the express declaration of the will of God? As to which controversie, he is no true *Christian* who dare not readily joyn issue with them, and undertake to prove by all the arguments by which they believe the *Law of Moses* to have been of *Divine revelation*, that the *Gospel of Christ* is a clear manifestation of the *Will of God*. But of that afterwards.

Scct. 7.

From hence it is evident that God hath not by this place tied up himself from any further manifestation of his mind beyond the *Law of Moses*; but it may be they may put greater confidence in those expressions which seem necessarily to imply a perpetual and unalterable obligation in the *Law of Moses*; For, saith the late learned *Rabbi Manasse Ben Israel*, If by such expressions as those are used in *Scripture* which seem to import the perpetuity of the *Law of Moses*, somewhat else should be meant than they seem to express; what did *Moses* and the *Prophets* in using them but lay a stumbling-block in the ways of men, whereas they might have spoken clearly and told us there should a time come when the *Ceremonial Law* should oblige no longer? This being a charge of so high a nature, must not be dismissed without a particular enquiry into the expressions which are the ground and reason of it. The places most insisted on by the *Jews*, are *Deut. 29. 29.* Things which are revealed belong to us and to our children עד עולם for ever. So *Levit. 23. 14.* the precept of offering the first fruits is there called

Concil. in Le-  
vit. 9. 7.



called **עולם חקת** *a statute for ever*; and that of the *Pass-over*, *Exod. 12. 17.* where the same expression is used. From hence they *infer* that no alteration can happen as to the *Ceremonial Law*, since God himself hath declared that it shall continue for ever. To this common argument of the *Jews*, it is in general replied, That the word in which the main force of the argument lies, doth not carry with it an absolute perpetuity, but it signifies according to the subject it is joyned with. So when it is applied to God, it signifies *Eternity*, not so much from the mere importance of the word, as from the necessary existence of the *Divine nature*. Thence *Maimonides* himself can say, *Proinde sciendum est quod Olam non necessario significet* More Nevoch. p. 2. c. 28. *aternitatem, nisi ei conjungatur* *Ed* (**עד** *vel* **עד**) *idque vel post illud ut Olam vaed, vel ante Ad Olam.* Although this rule of his hath no certainty at all in it, as appears from his collection of it, which is because it is said, *Psal. 10. 16.* *The Lord he is King Olam vaed, for ever and ever*: but as I said already, that is not from the signification of the word, but the nature of the thing. And it is most plain in Scripture that **עולם** is so far from implying a necessary perpetuity, that it is applied to such things as can have no long duration, as *Exod. 21. 6.* and he shall serve him **לעולם**, that is, (as the *Jews* themselves expound it) to the next Jubilee, though it were near or far off. So *1 Sam. 1. 22.* where *Samuel* is said to abide before the Lord **על עולם** for ever, where we find *Maimonides* his *Ad Olam* in a sense very far short of *Eternity*; this is so plain that the formerly cited *R. Joseph Albo* doth in terms confess it, and produceth a multitude of other places to the same purpose. For which though he be sufficiently censured by his Brethren, yet we may see there may be some ingenuity left in a Jewish Rabbi, even in the grand dispute concerning the *Eternity* of the Law of *Moses*.

Sett. 8.

All the difficulty now is to assign some rational accounts why such precepts which God did not intend should be always obligatory, yet should be enforced upon them in such expressions which may seem at least to imply a perpetuity. Of which these may be given. First, That these precepts to which these expressions are annexed, should not be looked on as mere ambulatory Laws that did only concern them in their travels through the wilderness, and not continue obligatory when they were settled in

**Canaan.** For which purpose we are to observe, That though all the *Laws* were given in one *body* in the *wilderness*, yet the *obligation* to all of them did not commence at the same time, neither were they to continue for the same duration; these three sorts of *precepts* may be observed among them; first such as concerned them only in their present condition, as that about the *Tabernacle*, which was then a *moveable Temple* among them, suitable to their condition; but when they were settled, God was to have a settled house too. So that *precept* of going without the camp, Deut. 23. 12. had an immediate respect to their peregrination. Secondly, Such *precepts* as were given them, but they were not bound to perform them till their settlement in Canaan, as driving out the Canaanites, Numb. 33. 52. building the Temple in the place which God should choose, erecting *judicatories* in their several Cities, choosing a King, &c. Thirdly, There were such *precepts* as concern them where ever they were, whether in the *wilderness* or in Canaan; now these are the *precepts* which are said to be perpetual. This is the account given of it by H. Grotius; but because this may be liable to some exceptions, I therefore add, Secondly, That the reason of those expressions being annexed to the precepts of the Ceremonial Law, is, because they were to continue obligatory till such a remarkable period of time came which should alter the state of things among them. And such a period of time the coming of the *Messias* is by themselves supposed to be, when in their famous computation they make three *Epocha's*, before the Law, under the Law, and the coming of the *Messias*. And it is evident yet by them, that they do still expect a wonderful alteration of the State of things when the *Messias* comes; doth it not therefore stand to reason that לָעוֹלָם should be added to such things which were to continue till so great an alteration as should be on the coming of the *Messias*, especially if the coming of the *Messias* had been deferred so long as they falsely suppose it to be? But however, granting that a new series of times or αἰὼν is to commence from the *Messias*, there is very great reason why that expression should be added to those things which were to continue as long as the αἰὼν did, i. e. till *Messias* came, which we freely acknowledge. And in this sense is לָעוֹלָם often taken for such a duration of things which had some remarkable period to conclude it, as in the case

De Verit. Rel.  
Christ. l. 5. f. 7.



case of the *Jubilee*, in the *servant* mentioned, and the special *employment* which God called *Samuel* to, in this case, as to the event, or the end of his life in *Hannah's* designation, when she said he should attend upon the Lord for ever. Thirdly, These precepts are said to endure for ever, which would still have continued obligatory, unless God himself had altered the obligation of them, by a new revelation of his will. For in this case it is most certain that all positive precepts coming immediately from God, do carry with them an unalterable obligation, unless the Legislator himself do in as evident a way repeal them as he did once establish them; that is, in such Laws which depend merely upon God's positive and arbitrary will. For in this case God allows none to alter any thing concerning his Law; but indispensable obedience is our duty till God himself repeal his former Laws. And this we assert to be the case in the Gospel. So that it appears plainly that it implies nothing inconsistent with the wisdom of God to repeal an established positive Law, though some expressions to prejudiced minds seem to imply a perpetuity in it.

We come therefore to the third thing which may make a positive Law unalterable, which is, when the reason of it is immutable; for then, say they, it would argue mutability in God to repeal it. If we can therefore make it evident that the Ceremonial Law was not established on an immutable reason, and that the reason on which it was established doth suppose a state of things to come, in which it should expire, then there cannot be the least pretence of mutability in God on the repeal of such a Law. First, That it was not established upon an immutable reason: The immutable reason of a Law must either be fetched from the nature of the things commanded, or the grounds of the establishing of it; we have already proved that the nature of the positive precepts of the Ceremonial Law do not carry in them an intrinsecal goodness. And here the Sophistry of the Jews is apparently discovered, that when they are pressed with this, they take sanctuary in the Decalogue, or some spiritual precepts, which comprehend in them the general foundation of the Law, as, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*, &c. whereas these are very remote from the matter in controversy, which concerns not what precepts were moral in their Law, but what were purely ceremonial; which were

Sect. 9.

More Nervooh.  
l. 3. cap. 29.

so far from being founded on an immutable reason, that the particular occasions of the giving of many of them, is particularly assigned by their own Writers; especially in the main parts of the ceremonial worship of God among them, the reasons of which Maimonides saith may be deduced from the customs of the Zabaists, the knowledge of whose opinions and customs, he tells us, is *porta magna ad reddendas præceptorum causas*, gives much light to the Law of Moses; and particularly of himself he saith, *Sed multarum legum rationes & causæ mihi innotuerint ex cognitione fidei, rituum & cultus Zabiorum*; that he came to the right understanding of many of the Laws of Moses by his knowledge in the rites and customs of these Zabaists. Granting therefore the hypothesis of this learned Rabbi, that the precepts of the Law had most of them a particular respect to the Idolatrous customs of these people; what will hence follow but only this, That the reason of the ceremonial precepts did respect the customs in use when they were given, and so are not founded upon an immutable reason? And the more the precepts are whose reason is to be fetched from hence, the more plain and evident is the thing we intended by it, viz. that the Ceremonial Law is not founded upon an unalterable reason.

Sect. 10.

Levit. 19. 27.  
Voss. in Maim.  
de Idol. c. 12.

Phaleg. l. 4.  
cap. 8.

Now from this one head of the Idolatrous customs of those Nations about them hath that learned Authour deduced the reasons of very many of the most obscure commands of the Ceremonial Law: As that concerning rounding the corners of their heads, which Herodotus tells us was the custom of the Arabians, and others of the Babylonian Priests; by both which the Zabii may be meant, the superstition of the Zabii being Chaldean, as I have shewed already, and their name, as some conceive, from Saba the Son of Chus, whose posterity were seated in Arabia, near to the red Sea; and that which confirms this opinion, is, that the Sabeans did, as Philostorgius saith, worship the Sun and Moon, as the Zabaists did in Maimonides; and withall Bochartus makes it evident from Strabo, that some of the Babylonians called Gerrhæi, possessed themselves of the Country of the Sabeans, whereby this originally Chaldaick superstition might spread its self in these parts near the confines of Judæa, which might be the cause why all those rites which were used by these Idolatrous people, are so severely forbidden to the Jews: God thereby setting up a wall of separation between  
his



his people and the Nations round about them, by making the customs of the Jews almost *Antipodes* to theirs; as those of *Japan* are to them of *China*. Upon the same ground it is supposed that other precept was made against wearing a garment of linen and woollen, because the Idolatrous Priests used to go so clothed, as *Maimonides* tells us out of their books, and likewise that prohibition of a woman's wearing the arms of a man, and a man's wearing the garments of a woman, is very probably supposed to have had its original from that Idolatrous custom mentioned by the same Authour, *Ut vir gestet Vestimentum muliebre coloratum quando stat coram stella Veneris; similiter ut mulier induat lorica & arma bellica quando stat coram stella Martis*; but that Authour doth not deny a further reason to be couched in it for the preservation of publick honesty. Many other precepts are drawn from the same fountain by that same Authour, as the sowing of divers seeds in the same ground; the forbidding the eating of the fruit of their trees for the first three years after they came to *Canaan*; that being the furthest time wherein the trees of their own plantation would begin to bear in that Country. Now it was the custom of all those Idolatrous people, that the first time any tree did bear, part of the fruit was to be burnt up in an offering to the Idol, and the other part eaten in the Idol-Temple; or else they supposed their trees would never prosper: Now in opposition to this, God bids them bring the fruit of the fourth year to him, and eat of the fifth themselves, that it may yield unto you the increase thereof. So the Idolaters threatned all parents that their children would never live, unless they caused them to pass through the fire; from which custom *Maimonides* saith, some even in his time would take the children that were new born, and move them up and down over a fire wherein odoriferous smells were cast: Thence comes that strict prohibition of giving the children to *Moloch*, which was by that custom of passing through the fire. To this same Head, the same Authour refers that of not eating the member of a living creature, which we render flesh with the life thereof; which was forbidden, as he elsewhere tells us, not only for avoiding cruelty, but because the Heathen Nations were wont in their Idolatrous Feasts to take a member off from a living creature, and eat it afterwards; and in them likewise he supposeth they used the boiling the flesh and the milk together, which, saith he, besides that it affords

Lev. 19. 19.

More Nervo.

l. 3. c. 37.

Deut. 22. 5.

V. Selden de  
Diis Syris, synt.

2. cap. 4.

Lev. 19. 19.

Lev. 19. 23.

Lev. 19. 24, 25.

Lev. 20. 2, 3.

Gen. 9. 4.

More Nervo.

p. 3. c. 48.

a most

Exod. 23. 17,  
19. 34. 26.

Lev. 20. 23.  
1. Celsus, l. 4.

De verit. Rel.  
Christiane, l. 5.

a most gross nourishment, savours of their Idolatrous practices too; and therefore, saith he, it is observable that twice where this precept is mentioned, it follows that of the solemn appearance of the *Males* at Jerusalem thrice a year, whereby it seems to be implied that this action had relation to some great solemnity. These and several other precepts of the *Law of Moses* are deduced by that very learned Rabbi from Idolatrous customs, as the occasions of them; which seem to have the more reason in them, because that God did in the general so strictly forbid the Jews to walk after the custom of the Nations about them. Thence Origen takes notice of the τὸ ξενίζον τῶ νόμῳ, καὶ τὸ ἰδιότροπον καὶ αὐτὸς ποιεῖται; for which he saith, they were διαβεβλημένοι, reproached by the Heathens, because their Laws and Polity were so different from the custom of other Nations. Thus we see then that many precepts of the Ceremonial Law were founded, neither on the goodness of the things themselves, nor on any unalterable reason, but were enforced on a peculiar reason on the people of the Jews at that time, as they were a people separated from the rest of the world for the worship of the true God. And for the other great offices wherein their Religion did so much consist, viz. Sacrifices, distinction of meats, observation of Festivals, circumcision, and such like; The particular account and reason of them is either evident in the Law its self, or fully acknowledged by their own Writers, that it is here superfluous to insist on them: Especially since so many have done that so largely already (particularly Grotius) whose Labours I intend not to transcribe.

Sect. 11.

I come therefore to the second thing; which is, *That the Ceremonial Law was so far from being founded on an immutable reason, that while it was in its greatest force such a state of things was plainly foretold, with which the observation of that Law would be inconsistent.* For which we are to consider, that though the Law of Moses seemed outwardly to respect the temporal advantages of the people embracing it in the Land of Canaan; yet there was a Spring of Spiritual Promises whose head was higher than Jordan was, that ran down from the Patriarchs, and was more fully opened to some of them, which though it seemed to run under ground in the midst of the Ceremonial observations of the Law; yet it frequently brake forth and opened its self in the midst of them, and by degrees in



in the *Prophetical Age* did make its self a larger Channel, 'till in the *time of the Messias* by its force and violence it overthrew those banks which stood in the way of it, and overspread the face of the whole earth. It is evident by the whole series of the Scripture of the *Old Testament*, that God's ultimate intention was not to confine the saving knowledge of his will only to the *Jews*; for the great promise to *Abraham* was, *That in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed*; And as *Abraham* rejoiced to see that day afar off; so good *Jacob*, when he leaned on his *Jacob's staff*, took the height of that day-star from on high, which though like some of the fixed stars, might not for some time be visible to the inferior world; yet he foretold the time when he should descend into a lower orb, and become conspicuous in our Horizon. And consequently to his appearance in the world, would be the drawing not so much the eyes as the hearts of the world to him; for no sooner is it mentioned that *Shiloh* comes when the *Scepter* departs from *Judah*; but it immediately follows, *And to him shall the gathering of the people be*. Thus we see before ever the *Law of Moses* came to inclose the people of the *Jews* as God's peculiar people, there was a design on foot, for enlarging the bounds of God's inheritance, and making the uttermost parts of the earth his Son's possession. Can we then think that the *Law* which came afterwards, could disannul the *Covenant* made 430 years before, as the *Apostle* excellently reasons? Can we believe the *Mosaic* dispensation was the utmost of what God did intend, when God had before promised that the blessing of *Abraham* should come upon us *Gentiles* also? To which purpose it is very observable, that *Abraham* was justified not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision; for he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith, being uncircumcised, that he might be the Father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also. Whereby it is evident that the great blessings promised to *Abraham*, did not respect him merely as Progenitor of the *Israelites*, but in a higher capacity, as Father of the faithful; and that the ground of his acceptance with God did not depend on any Ceremonial Rite, such as circumcision was, God imputing his faith for righteousness before his being

Gen. 49. 10.

Gal. 4. 17.

Rom. 4. 10, 11.

ing circumcised. But because the time was not yet come wherein the grand mystery of man's salvation by the death of the Son of God was to be revealed; therefore when God called the Nation of the Jews from their bondage, he made choice of a more obscure way of representing this mystery to them through all the umbrages of the Law: And withall enforced his precepts with such terrible sanctions of curses to all that continued not in all that was written in that Law to do it, to make them the more apprehensive that the ground of their acceptance with God, could not be the performance of the precepts of that Law, but they ought to breathe after that higher dispensation wherein the way and method of man's salvation should be fully revealed when the fulness of time was come. Now therefore God left them under the Tutorage and Pædagogy of the Law, which spake so severely to them, that they might not think this was all God intended in order to the happiness of men, but that he did reserve some greater thing in store to be enjoyed by his people when they were come to age.

Self. 12.

So that though the Ceremonies of the Law had not a mouth to speak out Christ; yet they had a hand to point to him; for they were the shadow or dark representation of that which was to be drawn afterwards to the greatest life. And this was understood by all those whose hearts were carried beyond the outward, sapless Letter of the Law, to the more inward and spiritual meaning of it, (there being an εἰσωτεριὰ & ἐξωτεριὰ in the Law as well as Philosophy,) and these mysteries were too not so veiled and hidden, but all that were ἐπίπλου, fully initiated, might fully understand them; which made up that true spiritual Cabala, which was constantly preserved among the true Israelites, which was more largely commented on by the Prophets of succeeding Ages; whose care it was to unlock this Cabala, and to raise up the hearts of the people in a higher expectation of the great things which were to come. Thence we not only read of the solemn prayer of the Church of the Jews, that the knowledge of God might be dispersed over all the Nations of the earth, but we have many prophecies that when the mountain of the Lord's house should be exalted, all nations should flow unto it: that from the rising of the Sun to the going down thereof, God's name shall be great among the Gentiles, and

Psal. 67. 2.

Isaiah 2. 2.

Mal. 1. 11.



and in every place incense should be offered to his name, and a pure offering; for his name shall be great among the Heathen. That the Inscription on the High-priest's forehead, *Holiness to the Lord*, should by reason of the large diffusion of a Spirit of Holiness in the days of the Gospel, be set upon the bells of *Hor-* Zach. 14. 20.  
*ses*, and that the pots in the Lord's house should be as bowls before the Altar, i. e. that when the Levitical service should be laid aside, and that *Holiness* which was that appropriated to the Priests and Instruments of the Temple, should be discerned in those things which seemed most remote from it. That a Priesthood after another order than that of Aaron should be Psal. 110. 4, 5, 6.  
 established, viz. after the order of Melchisedeck; and that he that was the Priest after this order, should judge among the Heathen, and wound the heads over many Countries; that in the day of his power the people should (not be frightened to obedience with thunder-claps, and earth-quakes, as at Mount Sinai) but should come and yield themselves as a free-will offering unto him, and yet their number be as great as the drops of the dew which distill in the morning. That God out of other Nations Isa. 66. 21.  
 would take unto himself for Priests and for Levites; that the Hag. 2. 7.  
 desire of all Nations should speedily come; that the Messenger Mal. 3. 1.  
 of the Covenant should come into his Temple; nay, that seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy City; that then the vision and prophecy should be sealed up; that the Sacrifice and Oblation should be caused to cease; that the City Dan. 9. 24, 26, 27.  
 and the Sanctuary should be destroyed, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the War desolations are determined; that after threescore and two weeks Messias should be cut off, but not for himself; that by him transgression should be finished, and reconciliation for iniquity should be made, and everlasting righteousness should be brought in. And lest all these things should be apprehended to be only a higher advancing of the Levitical worship, and the way of external Ceremonies, God expressly saith, that he would make a new Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to Jer. 31. 31, 32.  
 the Covenant that I made with their Fathers, in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the Land of Egypt, which my Covenant they brake, although I was an husband to them, saith the Lord: But thus shall be the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the  
 E c Lord;

*Lord; I will put my Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. Can any one that now considers seriously the state of things thus described as it should come to pass, ever imagine that the Levitical service was ever calculated for this State? Was God's Worship to be confined to his Temple at Jerusalem, when all the Nations of the earth should come to serve him? Was the High-priest to make an atonement there, when an order of Priest-hood different from the Aaronical should be set up? Must the Tribe of Levi only attend at the Temple, when God should take Priests and Levites out of all Nations that serve him? What would become of the Magnificence and Glory of the Temple, when both City and Sanctuary shall be destroyed, and that must be within few prophetic weeks after the Messiah is cut off? And must the Covenant God made with the Israelites continue for ever, when God expressly saith, he would make a New One, and that not according to the Covenant which he made with them then? It is so evident then, as nothing can well be more, that under the Old Testament, such a state of Religion was described and promised, with which the Levitical worship would be inconsistent; and so that the Ceremonial Law was not at first established upon an immutable reason, which was the thing to be proved.*

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C H A P. VIII.

General Hypotheses concerning the Truth of the  
Doctrines of Christ.

*The great prejudice against our Saviour among Jews and Heathens, was the meanness of his appearance. The difference of the miracles at the delivery of the Law and Gospel. Some general Hypotheses to clear the subserviency of miracles to the Doctrine of Christ. 1. That where the truth of a doctrine depends not on evidence, but authority, the only way to prove the truth of the Doctrine, is to prove the Testimony of the Revealer to be infallible. Things may be true which depend not on evidence of the things. What that is, and on what it depends. The uncertainty of natural knowledge. The existence of God, the foundation of all certainty. The certainty of matter of faith proved from the same principle. Our knowledge of any thing supposeth something incomprehensible. The certainty of faith as great as that of knowledge; the grounds of it stronger. The consistency of rational evidence with faith. Yet objects of faith exceed reason; the absurdities following the contrary opinion. The uncertainty of that which is called reason. Philosophical dictates no standard of reason. Of transubstantiation and ubiquity, &c. why rejected as contrary to reason. The foundation of faith in matters above reason. Which is infallible Testimony; that there are ways to know which is infallible, proved. 2. Hypoth. A Divine Testimony the most infallible. The resolution of faith into God's veracity as its formal object. 3. Hypoth. A Divine Testimony may be known, though God speak not immediately. Of inspiration among the Jews, and Divination among the Heathens. 4. Hypoth. The evidences of a Divine Testimony must be clear and certain. Of the common motives of faith, and the obligation to faith arising from them. The original of Infidelity.*

**H**AVING now cleared that the Law of Moses was capable of a repeal, I come to the second enquiry, Whether the miracles of our Saviour did give a sufficient evidence of his power and

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authority to repeal it. I shall not (to prevent too large an excursion) insist on any other evidences of our Saviour's being the promised *Messias*, but keep close to the matter of our present debate concerning the evidence which ariseth from such a power of Miracles as our Saviour had in order to his establishing that doctrine which he came to publish to the world. The great stumbling-block in reference to our blessed Saviour among both the *Jews* and learned *Heathens*, was the meanness of his appearance in the world, not coming attended with that state and magnificence, which they thought to be inseparable from so great a person. The *Jews* had their senses so possessed with the thundrings and lightnings on mount Sinai, that they could not imagine the structure of their Ceremonial worship could be taken down with less noise and terrour than it was erected with. And withall collecting all those passages of the Old Testament which seemed to foretel such glorious things of the days of the *Messias*, (which either refer to his second coming, or must be understood in a spiritual sence) they having their minds oppressed with the sense of their present calamities, applied them wholly to an external greatness, whereby they might be delivered from the Tyranny of the Roman power. The *Heathens*, as appears by *Celsus* and others, thought it very strange that the Son of God should appear in the world with so little grandeur, and have no greater Train than twelve such obscure persons as the Apostles were. For, saith *Celsus*, ὅσπερ ὁ ἥλιος πάντα τὰ ἀλλὰ φωτίζειν πρῶτον αὐτὸν δεῖνύει, ὅπως ἐχέτω ποιούμεναι τὸ ὑπὲρ ὅσων δεινόν. As the Sun, which enlightens all other things, doth first discover himself, so it was fitting the Son of God should doe when he appeared to the world. And so we say he did to all such whose minds were not blinded through obstinacy and wilfull ignorance. For although this Son of righteousness was pleased for the better carrying on his design in the world to wrap up himself in a cloud, yet his glory could not be confined within it, but did break through that dark veil of his humane nature, and did discover it self in a most clear and convincing manner. His appearances indeed were not like those upon Mount Sinai, because his design was not to amuse men with the glory of his Majesty, and to terrifie them from Idolatry, (which was a great reason of those dreadful phenomena at the delivery of the Law) but he came to draw all men to him by the power and energy of his Grace, and there-fore

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fore afford them all *rational convictions* in order to it. And therefore the quality of our Saviour's miracles was *considerable* as well as the *greatness* of them. The intent of them all was to do good, and thereby to bring the world off from its sin and folly, to the embracing of that *holy doctrine* which he came to publish to the world.

Now that such a power of miracles in our Saviour had the greatest subserviency to the giving full and convincing evidence that he was the person he declared himself to be, and that his doctrine was thereby so clearly attested, that it was nothing but obstinacy, which could withhold assent, will appear by these following Hypotheses which I lay down in order to the proving it.

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Where the truth of a doctrine depends not on the evidence of the things themselves, but on the authority of him that reveals it, there the only way to prove the doctrine to be true, is to prove the Testimony of him that revealed it to be infallible. Several things are necessary to be proved for the clearing this proposition.

1. Hypoth.

1. That it is not repugnant to reason that a doctrine should be true which depends not upon the evidence of the thing it self. By evidence of the thing I understand so clear and distinct a perception of it, that every one who hath the use of his rational faculties, cannot but upon the first apprehension of the terms yield a certain assent to it; as that the whole is greater than a part; that if we take away equal things from equal, the remainder must be equal. Now we are to observe, that as to all these common notices of humane nature which carry such evidence with them, the certainty of them lies in the proposition as it is an act of the mind abstracted from the things themselves; for these do not suppose the existence of the things; but whether there be any such things in the world or no as whole or parts, the understanding is assured that the Idea of the whole carries more in its representation than that of a part does. This is the great reason of the certainty and evidence of Mathematical truths, not as some imagine, because men have no interest, or design, in those things, and therefore they never question them, but because they proceed not upon sensible but abstracted matter, which is not liable to so many doubts as the other is; for that a Triangle hath three Angles no man questions; but whether such sensible parts of matter make a Triangle, may be very questionable. Now that the truth

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of beings, or the certainty of existence of things cannot be so certain as *Mathematical demonstrations*, appears from hence : because the manner of conveyance of these things to my mind cannot be so clear and certain as in purely intellectual operations, abstracted from existent matter. For the highest evidences of the existence of things must be either the judgment of sense, or clear and distinct perception of the mind ; now proceeding in a mere natural way, there can be no infallible certainty in either of these ; For the perception of the mind in reference to the existence of things being caused so much through those *Idea's* or *Phantasms* which are conveyed to the understanding through the impressions of sense, if these may be demonstrated to be fallacious, I may well question the certainty of that, which I am certain I have been deceived by ; supposing then I should question the truth of every thing which is conveyed in an uncertain way to my mind, I may soon out-go even *Pyrrho* himself in real *Scepticism*. Neither can I conceive how clear and distinct perception of any thing though not coming through the senses, doth necessarily infer the existence of the thing ; for it only implies a non-repugnancy of it to our natural faculties, and consequently the bare possibility of it. For otherwise it were impossible for us to have a clear perception of any thing any longer than it exists ; nay, than we know it to exist ; for existence or non-existence is all one to the understanding, while it is not assured of either. And it is withall evident that things imaginary may clearly affect the mind as well as real, for I may have as real and distinct perception of a *Phœnix* in my mind, as of a *Partridge* ; doth it therefore follow that the one is really existent as well as the other ? and it will be a very hard matter to assign a certain difference between imagination and pure intellection in such things, which though not actually existent, yet imply no repugnancy at all to the faculties of mens minds. It is evident then, that there cannot be so great certainty of the existence of things as there may be of *Mathematical demonstrations*.

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And if that principle be supposed as the foundation of all *Physical* certainty as to the being of things, viz. that there is a God who being infinitely good will not suffer the minds of men to be deceived in those things which they have a clear and distinct perception of (without which supposition we cannot be assured of the certainty of any operations of the mind, because we cannot know  
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but we were so *made* that we might be then most *deceived*, when we thought our *selves* most *sure* :) If this *principle*, I say, be supposed as the foundation of all certain knowledge, then from it I *infern* many *things* which are very much *advantageous* to our certainty in *matters of faith*.

*That the foundation of all certainty lies in the necessary existence of a being absolutely perfect.* So that unless I know that there is a *God*, I cannot be *assured* that I know any *thing* in a certain *manner*; and if I *know* there is a *God*, I must necessarily apprehend him to be *absolutely perfect*; because the *grounds* of my *knowledge*, that there is a *God*, are from those *absolute perfections*, which there are in him; and if I could *suppose* him not *absolutely perfect*, I must suppose him not to be *God*; for that is necessarily implied in his *definition*. Now then if all *certainty* doth suppose the *existence* of a *being* so *absolutely perfect*, I must, before I can *know* any *thing* *certainly*, conclude that there is an *infinity* of *knowledge*, *wisdom*, *power* and *goodness* in this *God*; for those are *things* which all who *understand* them will grant to be *perfections*; and if they be in *God*, they must be *absolute*, i.e. *infinite*. And if they be *infinite*, it necessarily follows that they must *transcend* our *apprehensions*; so that now we have *gained* this *principle* in *order* to *faith*, that we must grant *something* to be *unconceivable* before we can come *certainly* to *know* any *thing*. From whence it follows that those who will not *believe* any *thing* to be *true* because it is above their *apprehensions*, must deny the *foundation* of all *certainty*, which (as we have proved) doth suppose *something* to be *infinite*, or above our *capacity* to *comprehend*.

*That we have as great certainty of what-ever is revealed to us from God, as we can have of the truth of any thing which we most clearly understand.* For the *truth* of *knowledge* depending on this *supposition*, That there is a *God* whose *goodness* will not suffer us to be *deceived* in the *things* we *clearly understand*; there is the same *foundation* for the *act* of *faith* as for that of *knowledge*, viz. *That God will not suffer us to be deceived in matters which himself hath revealed to us.* Nay there seems to be far greater on these accounts. First, *That there is not so great danger to be deceived* in reference to *objects* of *sense*, as there is in reference to *objects* of *Divine revelation*: because *objects* of *sense* make a *continual impression* upon the *Organs* of *sense*; and as to these

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*things* we see the whole *world* agrees in them so far as they are necessary to life, and withall they bear a greater correspondence to the present state of imperfection which the soul is now in : but now matters of Divine revelation are of a more sublime and spiritual nature, which mens minds on that account are more apt to doubt of, than of things obvious to sense; and withall they call the mind so much off from sense that on these accounts the proneness to doubt is greater, and therefore the foundation of certainty from God's not suffering us to be deceived must be stronger. Secondly, There is not so great danger in being deceived as to matters of sense or knowledge, as there is in things of Divine revelation. For we see, granting sense to be deceived, and that we have no certainty at all in natural things, yet affairs of life are managed still; men's outward welfare depends not on the judgment of sense; the merchant hath never the less gold in his Ship because his sense deceives him in judging that the earth moves from him, when the Ship moves from it. The Sun doth nevertheless enlighten the world, though our senses be all of Epicurus his mind, that the Sun is no bigger than he seems to be; but now as to matters of Divine revelation, they are things of the most unspeakable weight and importance, which depend upon our believing or disbelieving them. And therefore if the goodness of God be such as it will not suffer us to be deceived in our judgment of material and sensible beings, how much less in reference to the foundation of our certainty as to things Divinely revealed? We see then what rational evidence there is not only consistent with, but necessarily implied in the foundation of faith, even as great as in any thing which we do most perfectly know; so that the in-evidence which is so much spoken of as an ingredient of the nature of faith, must not be understood of the foundation whereon the act of faith doth stand, but of the condition of the object, which being a matter of divine revelation, is a thing not obvious to our senses : In which sence the Apostle speaks, that faith is ἐλπιζομένων ἐπι-  
 Heb. 11. 1. *σας, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος* ἢ βλεπομένων, the firm expectation of things hoped for, and strong conviction of things which are not seen : In which words, as Erasmus well observes, is contained only an high Encomium of faith, and no dialectical definition of it; viz. that faith soars above things of sense or present enjoyment; yea, though the objects of it be never so remote from either,



either, yet where there is sufficient evidences of divine revelation, faith boggles at no difficulties, but is firmly resolved that that God who hath revealed these things, can and will bring them to pass in his own time. There is not then any such contrariety between the foundation of faith and knowledge, as the Schoolmen have persuaded the world; we see both of them proceed on the same foundation of certainty; all the difference is, faith fixeth on the veracity of God immediately in reference to a divine testimony; knowledge proceeds upon it, supposing no divine revelation as to the things it doth discover.

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We hence infer, that if the certainty of our knowledge depends on this principle, that God will not suffer us to be deceived, then we are bound to believe whatever God doth reveal to us, though we may not be able to comprehend the nature of the things revealed. For as to these things, we have the same ground of certainty which we have as to any natural causes, for as to them, we now suppose from the former principle, that setting aside the existence of God, we could have no certainty of them, but that the formal reason of our certainty is resolved into this, that God's goodness will not suffer the understanding to be deceived as to these things; the same I say as to spiritual mysteries revealed by God; the ground of our certainty lies not in the evidence of the things, but in the undoubted veracity of God, who hath revealed them. All that I can imagine possible to be replied to this, is, That God's veracity assures us in natural causes that we are not deceived, only where we have a clear and distinct perception of the things, but now in matters above our reason to comprehend, there can be no clear and distinct perception. To this I answer,

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First, It is evident in the foundation of all certainty of knowledge, that there may be a clear and distinct perception of that which we cannot comprehend, viz. of a being absolutely perfect; for if we have not a clear and distinct perception of God, the foundation of all certainty is destroyed, which is the necessary existence of such a being; and he that shall say he cannot have a clear perception of God without comprehending him, doth contradict himself; for if he be a being infinite, he must be incomprehensible; therefore there may be clear perception, where the object it self is above our capacity. Now whatever foundation there is in nature for such a perception without comprehension;

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that and much more is there in such things as are revealed by God, though above our apprehension : For the Idea of God upon the soul of man cannot be so strong an evidence of the existence of a being above our apprehension, as the revelation of matters of faith is, that we should believe the things so revealed though our understandings lose themselves in striving to reach the natures of them, and the manner of their existence.

2. Secondly, That which is the only foundation of a scruple in this case, is a principle most unreasonable in it self, that we are to embrace nothing for truth, though divinely revealed, but what our reason is able to comprehend as to the nature of the thing, and the manner of its existence; on which account the doctrine of the Trinity, Incarnation, Satisfaction, and consequently the whole mystery of the Gospel of Christ must be rejected as incredible, and that on this bare pretence, because although many expressions in Scripture seem to import all these things, yet we are bound to interpret them to another sense, because this is incongruous to our reason. But although Christianity be a Religion which comes in the highest way of credibility to the minds of men, although we are not bound to believe any thing but what we have sufficient reason to make it appear that it is revealed by God, yet that any thing should be questioned whether it be of divine revelation, merely because our reason is to seek, as to the full and adequate conception of it, is a most absurd and unreasonable pretence : And the Assertors of it must run themselves on these unavoidable absurdities.

13. First, Of believing nothing either in nature or Religion to be true, but what they can give a full and satisfactory account of, as to every mode and circumstance of it. Therefore let such persons first try themselves in all the appearances of nature; and then we may suppose they will not believe that the Sun shines, till they have by demonstrative arguments proved the undoubted truth of the Ptolomaick or Copernican hypothesis; that they will never give credit to the flux and reflux of the Sea, till they clearly resolve the doubts which attend the several opinions of it. That there is no such thing as matter in the world, till they can satisfactorily tell us how the parts of it are united; nor that there are any material beings, till they have resolved all the perplexing difficulties about the several affections of them; and that themselves have not so much as a rational soul, till they



they are bound to *satisfie* us of the *manner* of the *union* of the *soul* and *body* together. And if they can *expedite* all these, and many more *difficulties* about the most *obvious* things (about which it is another thing to frame *handsome* and *consistent* *hypotheses*, than to give a certain *account* of them) then let them be let loose to the *matters* of *divine* revelation; as to which yet (if they could perform the other) there were no *reason* for such an *undertaking*; for that were,

Secondly, To *commensurate* the *Perfections* of *God* with the narrow capacity of the *humane* intellect; which is contrary to the natural *Idea* of *God*; and to the *manner* whereby we take up our *conceptions* of *God*; for the *Idea* of *God* doth suppose *incomprehensibility* to belong to his *nature*; and the *manner* whereby we form our *conceptions* of *God*, is, by taking away all the *imperfections* we find in our *selves*, from the *conception* we form of a being *absolutely* perfect, and by adding *infinity* to all the *perfections* we find in our own *natures*. Now this *method* of *proceeding* doth necessarily imply a vast *distance* and *disproportion* between a *finite* and *infinite* understanding. And if the *understanding* of *God* be *infinite*, why may not he *discover* such *things* to us, which our *shallow* apprehensions cannot reach unto? what *ground* or *evidence* of *reason* can we have that an *infinite* wisdom and *understanding*, when it undertakes to *discover* *matters* of the *highest* nature and concernment to the *world*, should be able to deliver *nothing* but what comes within the *compass* of our *imperfect* and *narrow* intellects? And that it should not be sufficient that the *matters* revealed do none of them *contradict* the *prime* results or *common* notions of *man-kind* (which none of them do) but that every particular *mode* and *circumstance*, as to the *manner* of existence in *God*, or the extent of his *omnipotent* power, must pass the *scrutiny* of our *faculties*, before it obtains a *placet* for a *divine* revelation?

Thirdly, It must follow from this principle, That the *pretenders* to it must affirm the *rules* or *maxims* which they go by in the *judgment* of *things*, are the *infallible* standard of *reason*: Else they are as far to seek in the *judgment* of the *truth* of things as any others are. They must then, to be consistent with their principle, affirm themselves to be the *absolute* Masters of *reason*: Now *reason* consisting of *observations* made concerning the *natures* of all beings, for so it must be considered, as it is

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a rule of judging. viz. as a *System* of *infallible* rules collected from the *natures* of *things* ) they who pretend to it, must *demonstrate* these general *maxims* according to which they judge, to be collected from an universal undoubted *history* of *nature*, which lies yet too *dark* and *obscure* for any to pretend to the *full* knowledge of, and would be only a *demonstration* of the highest *arrogance* after so many *successless* endeavours, of the most *searching* wits in any *society* of *persons* to *usurp* it to themselves, especially if such *persons* are so far from *searching* into the *depths* of *nature*, that they suffer themselves very fairly to be led by the *nose* by the most *dogmatical* of all *Philosophers*; and that in such *principles* which the more *inquisitive* world hath now found to be very *short*, *uncertain* and *fallacious*. And upon *severe* enquiry we shall find the grand *principles* which have been taken by these *adorers* of *reason*, for almost the *standard* of it, have been some *Theories* which have been taken up merely from *observation* of the *course* of *nature* by such *persons*, who scarce owned any hand of *providence* in the world. Now it cannot otherwise be conceived but that these *theories* or *principles* formed from such a *narrow* inspection into the *natures* of *things*, must make strange work when we come to *apply* those *things* to them, which were never *looked* at in the *forming* of them: Whence came those two received *principles*, that nothing can be produced out of nothing; that there is no possible return from a privation to a habit, but from those *Philosophers* who believed there was nothing but matter in the world; or if they did assert the existence of a God, yet supposed him unconcerned in the Government of the world. Whence come our *Masters* of *reason* to tell us that the soul cannot subsist after death without the body? from what *Philosophy* was this derived? certainly from that which was very loth to acknowledge the *immortality* of the soul of man: And any one who strictly *observes* the close coherence of the *principles* of the *Peripatetick* *Philosophy* will find very little room left for an eternal being to interpose it self in the world; and therefore some have shrewdly observed that *Aristotle* speaks more favourably of the being of God in his *Exotericks*, than in his *Acromaticks*, which all that know the reason of the names, will guess at the reason of. I demand then, must the received *principles* of *Philosophy*, and those short imperfect *Theories*, which were formed more from tradition than experience,

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by the ancient *Greeks*, be taken from the *standard of reason* or no? If they must, we may soon *forſake* not only the *ſublimmer mysteries* of the *Trinity*, *Divinity of Chriſt*, *Reſurrection*, &c. but we ſhall ſoon ſhake *hands* with *Creation*, *Providence*, if not *immortality of ſouls*, and the *Being of God himſelf*. If theſe things be *diſowned* as the *ſtandard of reaſon*, let us know what will be *ſubſtituted* in the *room* of them; and what *Laws* our *faith* muſt be *tryed* by. Are they only *Mathematical demonſtrations*, or the *undoubted common notions* of *humane nature*, which whoſoever underſtands *affents* to them? let any of the *forementioned mysteries* be made appear to *contradiet* theſe, and we will readily yield up our ſelves *captives* to *reaſon*: But in the mean time let no *jejune unproved Hypotheſes* in *Philophy*, be ſet as *Judges* over *matters of faith*, whoſe only *warrant* for that *office* muſt be *Stat pro ratione voluntas*. Let the *principles* we proceed by, be *firſt manifested* to be *collected* from a *moſt certain and univerſal inſpection* into the *nature* of all *beings*, let the *manner of proceſs* be ſhewed how they were *collected* (leſt they labour with the common fault of the *Chymiſts*, of eſta bliſhing *hypothetical principles* from the *experiments* of ſome particular *bodies*, which others do as evidently *refute*) and laſtly, let it be made appear that theſe *principles*, thus *collected*, will ſerve *indifferently* for all *beings*, *ſpiritual* as well as *material*, *infinite* as well as *finite*, and when this *Task* is exactly performed, we will make *room* for *Reason* to ſit upon the *Bench*, and bring the *Scripture* as the *Prisoner* to its *Bar*.

Fourthly, According to this principle, what certainty can we have at all of any thing we are to believe? who hath fixed the bounds of that which men call *reaſon*? how ſhall we know that thus far it will come, and no further? If no banks be raiſed againſt it to keep it in its due channel, we may have cauſe to fear it may in time overthrow not only the *Trinity*, *Incarnation*, *Reſurrection of the dead*, but all other articles of the *Creed* too? What *preſcription* can be pleaded by one ſort of men for *reaſon* more than for another? One will not believe this article of his *faith*, becauſe againſt his *reaſon*; and why not another reject another article on the ſame pretence? for whatever the ground of *unbelief* be, if it be but *baptized* by the name of *reaſon*, it muſt by this principle paſs *uncontrouled*;

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if a fullen *Philosopher* shall tell us, that the *notion* of an *immaterial substance* contradicts his *reason* as much as the *Trinity* doth *theirs*, and that the *Universe* is *nothing* else but a *System* of *bodies*, by what *Artifice* will our *Master* of *reason* purge away all that *black choler*, that so *clouds* his *mind*, that he cannot see the *notion* of a *spirit* through it? And such a one will make a hard *shift*, but he will *reconcile* his *opinion* with *Scripture* too; and therefore why should he be bound up to *mens explications* of *Scripture*, when there is no *necessity*, that he can see, of *understanding* it in any other way than his own? If another should come and tell us, that we must be all *Anthropomorphites*, and that otherwise the *Scripture* were not *intelligible*; shall not this *man* put in for *reason* too? Nay, lastly, if another shall come and speak out, and tell us *Religion* is but a *device* of *subtle men*, that all *things* come to pass through *chance*, that the *world* was made by a *fortuitous course* of *Atoms*, and that all are *fools* which are not *Atheists*, and that it is impossible to apprehend the *Being* of a *God*, and therefore by the same *reason* that they reject some *mysteries* of *Religion*, he rejects the *foundation* of all; because an *infinite being* is *incomprehensible*: whither now hath our *Reason* carried us? while we pretend to reject any thing as *divinely revealed*, merely on that *account*, that it is *above* our *reason*? But it may be replied, *On what account then do we reject the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, and the ubiquity of the body of Christ, as repugnant to reason, if we do not make reason judge in matters of faith?* I answer, 1. We reject these *opinions* not only as *repugnant* to *reason*, but as *insufficiently* proved from *Scripture*, whereas we here suppose (it not being our present business to prove it) that the several *Doctrines* of the *Trinity*, *Incarnation*, *Resurrection* of *bodies*, &c. are only rejected on that *account*, that though *Scripture* seems to speak fair for them, yet it is otherwise to be *interpreted*, because supposed to be *repugnant* to *reason*. 2. Those *Doctrines* before mentioned are eminently *serviceable* to promote the *great end* of the *Gospel*, and are *inlaid* in the very *foundation* of it, as that of the *Trinity*, and *Divinity* of *Christ*; but these we now mention are no ways *conduccable* to that *end*; but seem to *thwart* and *overthrow* it, and *Transubstantiation* establisheth a way of *worship* contrary to the *Gospel*. 3. All the *founda-*  
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tion of *Transubstantiation* is laid upon ambiguous places of *Scripture*, which must of necessity have some *Tropes* and *Figures* in them; but the *Doctrine* of the *Trinity* is not only contained in plain *Scripture*, but is evidenced by visible appearance, as particularly at the *baptism* of our *Saviour*. 4. There is far greater ground why we should reject *Transubstantiation* and *ubiquity*, as inconsistent with reason, than that they should the *Trinity*, on this account, because the grounds of reason on which we reject those opinions, are fetched from those essential and inseparable properties of bodies, which are inconsistent with those opinions; now these are things within the reach of our understandings (in which case God himself sometimes appeals to reason) but it is quite another case, when we search into the incomprehensible nature of God, and pronounce with confidence that such things cannot be in God, because we cannot comprehend them; which gives a sufficient answer to this objection. The substance then of this discourse is, that whatever *Doctrine* is sufficiently manifested to be of divine revelation, is to be embraced and believed as undoubtedly true, though our reason cannot reach to the full apprehension of all the *Modes* and *Circumstances* of it. So that as to these sublime mysteries our faith stands upon this twofold bottom. First, That the being, understanding, and power of God doth infinitely transcend ours, and therefore he may reveal to us matters above our reach and capacity. Secondly, That whatever God doth reveal is undoubtedly true, though we may not fully understand it; for this is a most undoubted principle, that God cannot and will not deceive any in those things which he reveals to men. Thus our first supposition is cleared, that it is not repugnant to reason, that a doctrine may be true, which depends not on the evidence of the thing it self.

The second is, That in matters whose truth depends not on the evidence of the things themselves, infallible testimony is the fullest demonstration of them. For these things, not being of *Mathematical* evidence, there must be some other way found out for demonstrating the truth of them. And in all those things whose truth depends on *Testimony*, the more creditable the *Testimony* is, the higher evidence is given to them; but that *Testimony* which may deceive, cannot give so pregnant an evidence as that which cannot; for then all imaginable objections

*objections* are taken off. This is so clear, that it needs no further proof; and therefore the *third* follows.

3.

*That there are certain ways whereby to know that a Testimony delivered is infallible; and that is fully proved by these two Arguments.* 1. That it is the duty of all *these* to whom it is propounded to believe it; now how could that be a duty in them to believe, which they had no ways to know whether it were a Testimony to be believed, or no? 2. Because God will condemn the world for unbelief: In which the Justice of God's proceedings doth necessarily suppose that there were sufficient arguments to induce them to believe, which could not be, unless there were some certain way supposed whereby a Testimony may be known to be infallible. These three things now being supposed, viz. that a Doctrine may be true which depends not on evidence of reason; that the greatest demonstration of the truth of such a Doctrine, is its being delivered by infallible Testimony; and that there are certain ways whereby a Testimony may be known to be infallible, Our first principle is fully confirmed, which was, that where the truth of a Doctrine depends not on evidence of reason, but on the authority of him that reveals it, the only way to prove the Doctrine to be true, is to prove the Testimony of him that reveals it to be infallible.

Sect. 8.  
Hyp. 2.

The next principle or Hypothesis which I lay down, is, That there can be no greater evidence that a Testimony is infallible, than that it is the Testimony of God himself. The truth of this depends upon a common notion of humane nature, which is the veracity of God in whatever way he discovers himself to men; and therefore the ultimate resolution of our faith, as to its formal object, must be alone into the veracity of God revealing things unto us; for the *principium certitudinis*, or foundation of all certain assent can be fetched no higher, neither will it stand any lower than the infallible verity of God himself; and the *principium patefactionis*, or the ground of discovery of spiritual truth to our minds must be resolved into Divine Testimony, or Revelation. These two then not taken asunder, but jointly, God, who cannot lye, hath revealed these things, is the only certain foundation for a divine faith to rest it self upon. But now the particular exercise of a Divine faith lies in a firm assent to such a particular thing



thing as *Divinely revealed*, and herein lies not so much the *Testimony*, as the *peculiar energy* of the *Spirit of God* in *inclining* the soul to *believe* peculiar objects of faith, as of *Divine revelation*. But the general ground of faith, which they call the *formal object*, or the *ratio propter quam credimus* is the general *infallibility* of a *Divine Testimony*. For in a matter concerning *divine revelation*, there are two great questions to be resolved; The first is, *Why I believe a Divine Testimony* with a firm assent? The answer to that is, *Because I am assured, that whatever God speaks is true*: the other is, upon what grounds do I believe this to be a *Divine Testimony*? the resolution of which, as far as I can understand, must be fetched from those *rational evidences* whereby a *Divine Testimony* must be distinguished from one merely *humane* and *fallible*. For the *Spirit of God* in its workings upon the mind, doth not carry it on by a *brutish impulse*, but draws it by a *spiritual discovery* of such *strong* and *persuasive* grounds to assent to what is *revealed*, that the mind doth readily give a firm assent to that which it sees such *convincing reason* to believe. Now the strongest reason to believe, is the *manifestation* of a *divine Testimony*; which the *Spirit of God* so clearly discovers to a true believer, that he not only firmly assents to the general foundation of faith, the *veracity* of God, but to the particular object propounded, as a matter of *Divine Revelation*. But this latter question is not here the matter of our discourse; our proposition only concerns the general foundation of faith, which appears to be so *rational* and *evident*, as no principle in nature can be more. For if the *Testimony* on which I am to rely be only God's, and I be assured from *natural reason*, that his *Testimony* can be no other than *infallible*, wherein doth the *certainty* of the foundation of faith fall short of that in any *Mathematical demonstration*? Upon which account a *Divine Testimony* hath been regarded with so much *veneration* among all who have owned a *Deity*, although they have been unacquainted with any certain way of *Divine revelation*. And the reason why any rejected such a *Testimony* among the *Heathens*, was either, because they believed not a *Deity*, or else that the particular *Testimonies* produced were mere *frauds* and *impostures*, and therefore no *Divine Testimony* as it was given out to be. But the principle still remained *indisputable*,

*In fragment.  
Cicer.*

that on *supposition* the *Testimony* were what it pretended to be, there was the greatest *reason* to believe it although it came not in such a *way* of *probation*, as their *sciences* proceeded in. From which principle arose that speech of *Tully* which he hath translated out of *Plato's Timæus*, *Ac difficillimum factu a Diis ortis fidem non habere, quanquam nec argumentis nec rationibus certis eorum oratio confirmetur.* By which we see what a *presumption* there was of *Truth*, where there was any evidence of a *Divine Testimony*. And no doubt upon the advantage of this principle it was the *Devil* gained so great credit to his oracles; for therein he did the most imitate *divine revelation*. From hence then we see what a firm bottom *faith* in the general stands upon, which is nothing short of an *Infallible Divine Testimony*: other things may conduce by way of *subserviency* for the *discovery* of this; but nothing else can be a sure foundation for a *Divine faith*, but what is a *Testimony* of *God* himself.

Señ. 9.  
Hyp. 3.

A *Testimony* may be known to be *divine* and *infallible*, though *God* himself do not speak in an *immediate way*. By being known, I do not mean the firm *perswasion* of a *mind* inlighined by the *Spirit* of *God*, but that there are sufficient evidences *ex parte rei* to convince men of it, which are not wilfully *blind* and *obstinate*, i. e. that the ground of *unbelief* in any cannot be imputed to the defect of sufficient motives to *faith*, but to their own *perverseness* and *prejudice* in not discerning them. Now that *God* may reveal and declare his *mind* to the world, not in an *immediate way*, but by some *instruments* he may make use of to that end, is not only evident from the great *suitableness* of such a way to the conditions of the persons he speaks to, but from the general *perswasion* of the world concerning the possibility of *Inspiration*. The *Jews* are so far from denying this, that it is the very foundation of their religion as well as ours, *God* discovering the most of his will to them by the *Prophets* or by persons *Divinely inspired*. And the general consent of all other *Nations*, that there is such a principle as *Divination* in the world, doth make it evident, that it carries no repugnancy at all to *natural light*, supposing that there is a *God*, that he should reveal his *mind* by some particular persons unto the world. For which purpose the *Testimony* of *Tully*, in the entrance of his *Books de Divinatione*,



*natione*, is very considerable. *Vetus opinio est jam usque ab Heroicis ducta temporibus, eaque & populi Romani & omnium gentium firmata consensu, versari quandam inter homines divinationem, quam Græci μαντινὴν appellant, i. e. præsensionem & scientiam rerum futurarum*; and soon after adds, *gentem quidem nullam video neque tam humanam atque doctam, neque tam immanem atque barbaram, quæ non significari futura, & a quibusdam intelligi, prædicique posse censeat.* He makes it appear to be an universal sentiment of all Nations in the world, and instanceth particularly in the *Assyrians, Egyptians, Cilicians, Pisidians, Pamphylians, Grecians, Romans, Etrurians*, and others. It is true indeed he after mentions some Philosophers who denied it; but they were most part the followers of *Epicurus*, who denied any providence, and therefore might well take away divination; but if *Xenophanes Colophonius* had any followers who asserted the one, and denied the other (as *Tully* seems to intimate that he was alone in that persuasion) yet we may probably suppose the reason of their rejecting it might be the impostures which went under the name of Divination among them; which are excellently discovered by that Prince of Roman Philosophers as well as Orators, in his second book of Divination; but it is apparent by the same Author, that the generality of Philosophers consented with the people in this persuasion, as the followers of those three great Sects of *Socrates, Pythagoras, and Aristotle* were all approvers of it; but of all persons the *Stoicks* were the most zealous contenders for it, especially *Chrysippus, Diogenes Babylonius, Antipater* and *Possidennius*: some indeed rejected some ways of Divination, yet embraced others, as *Dicæarchus* and *Cratippus*, who rejected all but dreams and ecstasies; but in the general we find these two principles went together among them, the existence of a Deity, and the certainty of Divination; so that from Divination they proved a Deity, and from a Deity Divination. *Si sunt genera divinandi vera, esse Deos; vicissimque si Dei sint, esse qui divinent*, as *Quintus Cicero* there speaks: and at last thus triumphs in the multitude of his witnesses, *Adum bestię loquantur expectamus, hominum consentiente auctoritate contenti non sumus*? It may not be amiss to produce the chief argument on which the *Stoicks* insisted to prove the necessity of Divination, supposing the existence of a Deity. If there

be Gods, say they, and they do not reveal to men things to come, it either is because they do not love them, or because they do not know themselves what shall come to pass, or they think it is of no concernment to men to know future things, or that it doth not become their Majesty to reveal them, or that they cannot reveal them to men if they would; but neither is it true that they do not love men; for the Gods are of a bountiful nature and friends to mankind, neither can they be ignorant of future things, because they are appointed and decreed by them, neither is it of no concernment to men to know future things; for that makes them more cautious if they know them; neither is it repugnant to their Majesty to reveal them, for nothing is more noble than bounty and doing good; and they must needs know these things; therefore they may make them known to others; and if they do make them known, there must be some way whereby to know that they do so; or else they signify them to no purpose. If now instead of the knowledge of future contingencies, and the multitude of their Gods, they had insisted on the discovery and revelation by the true God of those ways, which may lead men to eternal happiness, that argument had been strong and convincing, which as it stands is Sophistical and fallacious. So that it is very plain, that not only a possibility of Divination was acknowledged by those who wanted Divine revelation, but that this divination did not arise from mere natural causes, but from an *afflatus Divinus*, and a *concitatio quædam animi*, as they there speak, which imports nothing short of Divine inspiration. Nay the opinion of this was so common among them, that they thought any extraordinary persons had something of Divine Enthusiasm in them, as Tully elsewhere tells us, *Nemo vir magnus sine aliquo afflatu Divino unquam fuit*. Although then these Heathens were greatly mistaken as to those things they took for a Divine *afflatus* and Divination, yet we cannot conceive so general a sense should be imprinted on the minds of men of such a thing as that was, were it not a thing highly consonant to principles of reason, that God should communicate his mind to the world by the inspiration of some persons. And therefore I conceive that Cicero and his brother Quintus, who manage that excellent dispute of Divination between them, have divided the truth between them too. For on the one side Quintus evidently proves the possibility of the thing,



thing, the consequence of it upon the acknowledgment of a Deity, and the general consent of mankind in the owning of it; and on the other side Tully himself excellently lays open the vanity, folly, and uncertainty, not only of the common ways of Divination, but of the oracles which were in such great esteem among the Heathens. And although Tully doth so sharply and sarcastically answer the argument from the common consent of men; *quasi vero quidquam sit tam valde, quam nihil sapere, vulgare*; as though nothing men did more generally agree in, than in being fools; yet as it is evident that the ground of that scoff was from the several manners of Divination then in use, so it cannot be thought to be a general impeachment of humane nature in a thing so consequent upon the being of a God, which as himself elsewhere proves, is as clear from reason as from that *Testimonium gentium in hac una re non dissidentium*, as the Christian Cicero, Lactantius speaks, the consent of Nations, which scarce agree in any thing else, but that there is a God. That which we now infer from hence is, That God may make known his mind in a way infallible, though not immediate; for in case of Inspiration of mere men, it is not they so much which speak, as God by them; and in case that God himself should speak through the veil of humane nature, the Testimony must needs be infallible, though the appearance of the Divinity be not visible.

*De fals. relig.  
cap. 2.*

Those evidences whereby a Divine Testimony may be known, must be such as may not leave mens minds in suspense, but are of their own nature convincing proofs of it. For although as to the event some may doubt, and others disbelieve the Testimony so proved, yet it is sufficient for our purpose, that in the nature of the things (supposing them to be such as we speak of) they are sufficient for the evi<sup>ti</sup>ction that the testimony attested by them is divine and infallible. I know it is a great dispute among many, whether those things which are usually called the common motives of faith, do of their own nature only induce a probable perswasion of the truth of the doctrine as probable which they are joyned with, or else are they sufficient for the producing a firm assent to the doctrine as True? I grant they are not demonstrative so as to inforce assent; for we see the contrary by the experience of all ages; but that they are not sufficient foundation for an unprejudiced mind to establish a firm

*Se<sup>ct</sup>. 10.  
Hyp. 4.*

a firm *assent* upon, is a thing not *easy* to be *granted*; chiefly upon this account, that an *obligation* to *believe* doth *lie* upon every one to whom these *evidences* of a *Divine Testimony* are *sufficiently* discovered. And otherwise of all *sins* the *sin* of *unbelief* as to *God* revealing his *mind*, were the most *excusable* and *pardonable sin*; nay, it would be little less than a *part* of *prudence*; because what can it be *accounted* but *temerity* and *imprudence* in any to *believe* a *doctrine* as *true* only upon *probable inducements*? and what can it be but *wisdom* to *with-hold assent* upon a mere *verisimilitude*? considering what the *Lyrick Poet* hath long since truly told us.

Pindar. Od. I.

ὃ πῶς πῶς βροτῶν φρεσὶν  
 ὅσον τὸ ἀληθὲν λόγον  
 δεδαίδαλμῶσι φεύδει ποικίλεις  
 ὅσα πατὼν μῦθοι.

That a *falsehood* may frequently seem *truer* to common understandings than *truth* its self: and as *Menander* speaks, τὸ πᾶν ἰσθὲν τὸ ἀληθείας ἔχει ἐνίοτε μείζων, ὃ πᾶν ὁρᾷ ὄχλος, that a mere *verisimilitude* may have more force on *vulgar minds* than *truth* bath. If therefore there be no *evidences* given sufficient to carry the *minds* of *men* beyond mere *probability*, what *sin* can it be in those to *disbelieve* who cannot be *obliged* to *believe* as *true* what is only *discovered* as *probable*: I cannot therefore see how an *obligation* to *believe* a *Divine Testimony* is *consistent* with their *opinion*, who make the *utmost* which any outward *evidences* can extend to, to be only the bare *credibility* of the *doctrine* attested by them. I can very well *satisfy* my self with the ground and reason why the more *subtle wits* of the *Church of Rome* do *assert* this; for if nothing else can be *produced* by all *motives* of *faith* but only a *probable persuasion* of the *truth* of *Christian doctrine*, then here comes in the *fairest pretence* for the *Infallibility* of their *Church*; for otherwise they tell us we can have no *foundation* for a *Divine faith*; for how can that be a *foundation* for *Divine faith*, which can reach no higher than a *moral inducement*, and beget only a *probable persuasion* of the *credibility* of the *doctrine* of *Christ*? But on what account those who *disown* the *Infallibility* of the *Church of Rome* in the *proposal* of *matters* of *faith*, should yet *consent* with those of it in an *hypothesis* taken up in *probability*, merely out of *subserviency* to that most advantageous piece



piece of the *mystery of iniquity*, is not easie to resolve. Unless the *over-fondness* of some upon the doctrine of the Schools, more than of the Gospel, hath been the occasion of it. For how agreeable can that opinion be to the Gospel which so evidently puts the most *defensive weapons* into the hands of *unbelief*? For doubtless in the judgment of any rational person, a mere *probable persuasion* of the *credibility* of the doctrine of Christ, where an assent to it as true is required, can never be looked on as an *act of faith*; for if my assent to the truth of the thing be according to the strength of the arguments inducing me to believe, and these arguments do only prove a probability of *Divine Testimony*, my assent can be no stronger than to a thing merely probable; which is, that it may be, or not be true; which is not properly assent, but a suspending our judgments till some convincing argument be produced on either side. And therefore according to this opinion those who saw all the miracles which Christ did, could not be bound to believe in Christ, but only to have a favourable opinion of his person and doctrine, as a thing which though not evidenced to be true by what he did, yet it was very piously credible; but they must have a care withal of venturing their belief too far, only on such moral inducements as miracles were, for fear they should go further than the force of the arguments would carry them. Had not this opinion now, think we, been a very probable way to have converted the world upon the Preaching of Christ and his Apostles; when Christ saith, *though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him?* Nay, saith this opinion, that is more than we are bound to do, though we see thy works we are not bound to believe thy Testimony to be Divine and certainly true; but we will do all we are bound to do; we will entertain a favourable opinion of thy person and doctrine, and wait for somewhat else, but we do not well know what, to persuade us to believe. When the Apostles Preach the danger of unbelief, because the doctrine of the Gospel was confirmed by signs and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost; what a fair answer doth this opinion put into the mouths of Infidels, that notwithstanding all these signs and wonders, they were never bound to believe the Gospel as a certain Truth, and therefore they hope the danger is not so great in neglecting the salvation promised by the Gospel.

Joh. 10. 38.

Heb. 2. 3, 4

I can-

Sec<sup>d</sup>. II.

I cannot conceive that men otherwise *learned* and *sober*, should with so much *confidence* assert that the *rational evidences* of a *Divine Testimony* are *insufficient* to prove a *doctrine true*, unless it be from *hence*, that they find that notwithstanding the *strongest evidences* many persons continue in *unbelief*. For say they, if these arguments were *scientific* and *demonstrative*, (as they speak) of the *truth* of the *doctrine* attested by them, then all persons to whom they are propounded, must certainly believe. But this is very easily answered; for we speak not of *internal*, but *outward evidence*; not of that in the *subject*, but of the *object*, or more fully of the *reason* of the *thing*, and not the *event* in us; for doubtless there may be *undoubted truth* and *evidence* in many things which some persons either cannot or will not understand. If *Epicurus* should contend still that the *Sun* and *stars* are no bigger than they seem to be, will it hence follow that there can be no *rational demonstration* of the contrary? Nay, if the way of *demonstration* be offered him, and *Telescopes* put into his hands, yet if he be resolved to maintain his *credit*, and therefore his *opinion*, and will not use the *Telescopes*, or suspect still they are intended only to deceive his sight, what possible way will there be of convincing such a person, though the thing be in its self *demonstrable*? Now if the *strength* of *prejudice* or *maintaining* of *credit* can prevail so much in matters of *Mathematical evidence*, to withhold assent, what power may we think a *corrupt interest* may have upon the *understanding*, as to the arguments which tend to prove the *truth* of that *doctrine*, which is so repugnant to that *carnal interest* which the *heart* is already devoted to! Our *Blessed Saviour* hath himself given us so full an account of the *original* and *causes* of *unbelief* in the persons he conversed with, that that may yield us a sufficient answer to this *objection*. He tells us the *ground* of it was not want of *light*, nay, there was *light* sufficient to convince any, but that those to whom the *light* came loved *darkness* rather than it, because their deeds were *evil*. That they could not believe while they received *honour* one of another, and sought not the *honour* which was of *God only*, i. e. That they were so greedy of *applause* from each other, that they would not *impartially* search into the *truth* of that *doctrine*, which did touch their *sores* so to the *quick*, that they had rather have them *fester* upon them, than

Joh. 3. 19.

Joh. 5. 44.



than go to the trouble of so sharp a cure. That the reason so few followed him was because the way was narrow and the gate strait which men must go in at ; and therefore no wonder so few of the rich and proud Pharisees could get in at it ; they were partly so swell'd with a high opinion of themselves, and partly so loaden with their riches, that they thought it was to no purpose for them to think of going in at so strait a gate, while they were resolved to part with neither. Mat. 7. 14.

That the final ground of the rejection of any, was not want of evidence to bring them to believe, nor want of readiness in Christ to receive them if they did, but it was a peevish, wilful, obstinate, malicious spirit that they would not come to Christ, nor believe his Doctrine (for those import the same) but when the most convincing miracles were used, they would rather attribute them to the Prince of Devils, than to the power of God. And though our Saviour presently by rational and demonstrative arguments did prove the contrary to their faces ; yet we see thereby it was a resolution not to be convinced, or yield to the Truth, which was the cause why they did not believe. Now from this very instance of our Saviour's proceedings with the Pharisees by rational arguments, I demand, whether these arguments of our Saviour were sufficient foundations for a divine assent to that truth that our Saviour did not his miracles by any Diabolical but by Divine power or no ? If they were, then it is evident that rational evidence may be a foundation for Divine faith, or that some motives to believe may be so strong, as to be sufficient evidence of the truth and certainty of the Doctrine : If these arguments were not sufficient proofs of what our Saviour spake, then wofare the Pharisees ; it seems they said nothing but what might be thus far justified, that the contrary to it could not be demonstrated. And if the evidence of our Saviour's miracles were so great, as some suppose, that the Pharisees could not but be convinced that they were divine ; but out of their malice and envy they uttered this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, to keep the people from following Christ ; then we hence infer two things : First, How strong an evidence there was in the miracles of Christ, when it convinced his most resolute enemies that they were divine. Secondly, What power a corrupt will may have over a convinced understanding : For although the will may

not hinder *conviction*, yet it may soon *stifle* it, by suggesting those *things* to the *mind* which may divert it from those *convictions* of *Truth*; and seek to find out any *ways* to *disgrace* it. It would be no difficult *task* to *discover* in all those *instances* wherein the *unbelief* of men is *discovered* in the *New Testament*, that the *persons* guilty of it did not proceed like *rational men*, or such as desired *Truth*, but were wholly carried away through *passion*, *interest*, *prejudice*, *disaffection*, or some other *cause* of that *nature*, which may give us a sufficient *account* why those *persons* did not *believe*, although there might be *clear* and *undoubted evidence* to *persuade* them to it. But although I assert that these *rational evidences* are *sufficient arguments* of the *truth* of the *doctrine* they come to *manifest*, yet I would not be so *understood*, that I thereby *resolve* all *Religion* into a mere act of *reason* and *knowledge*, and that no more *power* is required in the *understanding* to *believe* the *Gospel*, than to *believe* a *Mathematical demonstration*: which is another *objection* some lay in the *way* of this *opinion*; but it is not difficult getting over it. For the *sufficiency* which I attribute to *rational evidence*, is not *absolute* and *simple*, but *in suo genere*, as an *objective evidence*. Notwithstanding this, the whole *work* of the *Spirit of God* in its *peculiar energy* and *way of operation* upon the *soul*, is left *entire* to it self: But then when the *spirit works* as to the *planting* of a *truly divine faith*, I do not think that it only *persuades* the *soul* of the *Truth* of a *Divine Testimony*, but withall represents the *Truths* revealed by that *Testimony*, with all that *excellency* and *suitableness* that there is in them, that by the most agreeable, yet *effectual influence* of the *spirit* upon the *soul*, it cheerfully *embraceth* that *Truth* which is revealed, and *cordially* yields up its self in *obedience* to it. This is the *Divine faith* which the *Scripture* acquaints us with, and not such a one as merely *believes* the *truth* of a *Divine Testimony*; and as to the *production* of this *faith*, I acknowledge mere *rational evidence* to be *insufficient*, because they proceed in two very different *ways*; the one is to satisfy *mens minds* in the *truth* of the *doctrine*, the other is to bring them *effectually* to *adhere* unto it. The *asserting* of the one therefore doth no more *tend* to *destroy* the other, than the saying that a *Telescope* will help us to discover very much of the *heavenly bodies*, doth imply that a *blind man* may see them,



*them, if he makes but use of them. Although therefore the natural man cannot savingly apprehend the things of God, yet there may be so much rational evidence going along with Divine revelation, that supposing reason to be pure, and not corrupted and steeped in sense as now it is, it would discover spiritual evidence to be the most real and convincing evidence. Thus far we have proved, That where there is any infallible Testimony, there is sufficient rational evidence going along with it, to make it appear that it is from God.*

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## C H A P. IX.

## The rational evidence of the Truth of Christian Religion from Miracles.

*The possibility of miracles appears from God and providence; the evidence of a Divine Testimony by them. God alone can really alter the course of nature. The Devil's power of working miracles considered. Of Simon Magus, Apollonius. The cures in the Temple of Æsculapius at Rome, &c. God never works miracles, but for some particular end. The particular reasons of the miracles of Christ. The repealing the Law of Moses, which had been settled by miracles. Why Christ checked the Pharisees for demanding a sign, when himself appeals to his miracles. The power of Christ's miracles on many who did not thoroughly believe. Christ's miracles made it evident that he was the Messiah, because the predictions were fulfilled in him. Why John Baptist wrought no miracles. Christ's miracles necessary for the overthrow of the Devil's Kingdom. Of the Demoniacs and Lunatics in the Gospel, and in the Primitive Church. The power of the name of Christ over them largely proved by several Testimonies. The evidence thence of a Divine Power in Christ. Of counterfeit dispossessions. Of miracles wrought among Infidels. Of the future state of the Church. The necessity of the miracles of Christ, as to the propagation of Christian Religion: that proved from the condution of the publishers, and the success of the Doctrine. The Apostles knew the hazard of their employment; before*

H h 2

*they*

they entred on it. The boldness and resolution of the Apostles notwithstanding this, compared with heathen Philosophers. No motive could carry the Apostles through their imployment, but the truth of their Doctrine; not seeking the honour, profit or pleasure of the world. The Apostles evidence of the truth of their Doctrine lay in being eye-witnesses of our Saviour's miracles and resurrection. That attested by themselves; their sufficiency thence for preaching the Gospel. Of the nature of the doctrine of the Gospel; contrariety of it to natural inclinations. Strange success of it, notwithstanding it came not with humane power: No Christian Emperour, till the Gospel universally preached. The weakness and simplicity of the instruments which preached the Gospel. From all which the great evidence of the power of miracles is proved.

Sect. 1.

Hyp. 5.

OF all rational evidences which tend to confirm the truth of a divine Testimony, there can be none greater than a power of working miracles for confirmation that the Testimony which is revealed is infallible. The possibility of a power of miracles cannot be questioned by any who assert a Deity and a Providence; for by the same power that things were either at first produced, or are still conserved (which is equivalent to the other) the course of nature may be altered, and things caused which are beyond the power of inferiour causes: For though that be an immutable Law of Nature as to Physical beings, that every thing remains in the course and order wherein it was set at the Creation; yet that only holds till the same power which set it in that order shall otherwise dispose of it; granting then the possibility of miracles, the subject of this Hypothesis is, That a power of miracles is the clearest evidence of a divine Testimony, which will appear from these following considerations.

1.

God alone can really alter the course of nature. I speak not of such things which are apt only to raise admiration in us because of our unacquaintedness with the causes of them, or manner of their production, which are thence called wonders, much less of mere juggles and impostures, whereby the eyes of men are deceived; but I speak of such things as are in themselves either contrary to, or above the course of nature, i.e. that order which is established in the universe. The Devil no question may, and doth often deceive the world, and may by the  
subtlety



*Subtilty and agility of his nature*, perform such things as may amuse the *minds of men*, and sometimes put *them* to it, to find a *difference* between *them* and real miracles, if they only make their *senses* judges of them. And such *kind of wonders*, though they are but sparingly *done*, and with a kind of *secrecy* (as though they were consulting with *Cataline* about the *burning Rome* yet the *Devil* would have *some* (especially when *Ignorance* and *Superstition* are *Ascendants*) to keep up his *interest* in the world. Or else, when he is like to be *dispossessed* and thrown out of all, he then tries his *utmost* to *keep* as many to him as may be; thus when the *Spirit of God* appeared in the *miracles* of our *Saviour* and his *Apostles* and the *Primitive Church*, he then conjured up all the *infernal Powers* to do something *parallel*, to keep possession of his *Idolatrous Temples*; as long as he could. Thus we find *Simon Magus* dogging the *Apostles* (as it were) at the *heels*, that by his *Magick* he might *stagger* the *faith* of people concerning the *miracles* wrought by the *Apostles*: after him *Apollonius* appeared upon the *Stage*; but his *wonders* are such *pitifull things*, compared with those wrought by *Christ* or his *Apostles*, that it could be *nothing* but *malice* in *Hierocles* to mention him in *competition* with *Christ*. But those *things* which seem a great deal more *considerable* than either of *these*, were, The cure of a *blind man* by *Vespasian* in *Agypt*, mentioned by *Tacitus* and *Sueton. Vesp.* *Suetonius*, wherein there was a palpable imitation of our *Saviour's* curing the *blind man* in the *Gospel*; for the man told *Vespasian*, *restiturum oculos si inspuisset*, that he should receive his sight by his spittle; So *Spartianus* tells us of a woman that was cured of her blindness by kissing the knees of the Emperour *Adrian*; and *Boxhornius* hath produced an old *Table* in the *Temple of Asculapius* at *Rome* of several diseased persons that were cured there: A *blind man* in the time of *Antoninus* was cured by this *Oracle*; he must come to the *Altar*, and kneel there; from the right side he must turn to the left, and put five fingers upon the *Altar*, and then lift up his hands and touch his eyes, and so was cured: Another called *Lucius* cured of the pain of his side, by mixing the ashes of the *Altar* with the wine, and applying it to his side; another cured of spitting of blood by the kernel of a pine-apple, and honey used three days; a fourth cured of *Quest. Rom.* blindness by the blood of a white Cock and honey used three days q. 7.

upon

upon his eyes. These are the most considerable of all the pretended miracles done about that time, when the noise of the Christian miracles were spread so far and done so frequently, that they challenged the Heathens again and again to bring forth any person possessed with a Devil, if he did not confess to them that he was a Devil, though he made the Heathens believe that he was a God, they were contented to leave their blood in the place.

*Apol. c. 23.*

For thus Tertullian speaks in his *Apology* to them : *Edatur hic aliquis sub tribunalibus vestris, quem dæmone agi constet : iussus à quolibet Christiano : qui spiritus ille, tam se Dæmonem confitebitur de vero, quam alibi Deum de falso : æque producaturnumen de nidore concipiunt, qui ructando curantur, qui anbelando profantur. Ista ipsa Virgo cælestis pluviarum pollicitatrix, iste ipse Æsculapius Medicinarum demonstrator, alias de mortuaturus scordii & denatii & Asclepiadoti subministrator, nisi se Dæmones confessi fuerint, Christiano mentiri non audentes, ibidem illius Christiani procacissimi sanguinem fundite. Quid isto opere manifestius, quid hac probatione fidelius ? simplicitas veritatis in medio est ; virtus illi sua assistit, nihil suspicari licebit, magia aut aliqua fallacia fieri. Dictis non stetis, si oculi vestri & aures permiserint vobis.* In these very daring words, we see how the Christians appealed to their senses, even with the hazard of their own lives, that they would make even Æsculapius himself confess what he was, and by whose power all the cures were wrought upon the dreamers in his Temples. And for the manner of the Devils cures, the same Author explains it thus, *Lædunt primo, dehinc remedia præcipiunt ad miraculum nova, siue contraria, post quæ desinunt lædere & curasse creduntur.* They first possess the bodies themselves (as Demoniacks were common in those times) and affect it with various distempers, afterwards upon using the strange remedies prescribed by Æsculapius, they forsake their station, and the person is cured. And for the cures performed by the Emperours, those who consider what various artifices were about that time used to procure an opinion of Divinity in the Emperours, will not much wonder that such reports should be spread of them, or that any persons should feign these distempers to give themselves out to be cured by them. But granting somewhat wonderfull in these, what are they,

*Apol. c. 22.*



they, compared with those done by *Christians*? and who ever would lay down his life to attest any of them? So that though the Devil by his *subtlety* may easily impose upon *Spectators* eyes, yet it was impossible for him by any power of his own to alter the course of nature, or produce any real miracle. For every true miracle is a production of something out of nothing (which cannot be done by less than an omnipotent arm) and that either in the thing it self, or the manner of producing it. In the thing it self, when it is of that nature that it cannot be produced by any second causes, as the raising of the dead; in the manner of doing it, when though the thing lies within the possibility of second causes, yet it is performed without the help of any of them, as in the cure of diseases without any use of means, by a word speaking, the touch of a garment, &c. Now that all those miracles which were wrought in confirmation of the *Christian doctrine* were such true and proper miracles, will be discovered afterwards.

God never alters the course of nature, but for some very considerable end. For otherwise when he did it, it would not be taken notice of, nor thought to be an alteration of the order of nature, but only some rare contingencies which lie hid in the order of causes, but only break out at some times: of which sort are all those things which the ignorant world is apt to account as *Prodigies*. Of all which rare contingencies in nature, I say, as the Roman Orator doth, *Si quod raro fit, id portentum putandum est, sapientem esse portentum est, sæpius enim mulum perisse arbitror, quam sapientem fuisse.* If all rare contingencies be accounted prodigies, a Wise man is certainly the greatest *Prodigy*. But these are quite of another nature from true miracles, which are immediately produced by a divine Power, and intended for a confirmation of some divine Testimony. There are now several weighty reasons which might make miracles necessary in the time of our Saviour, as an evidence of his Divine Authority and Power.

Sect. 2.

2.

Cicero de Div.  
l. 2.

That he came to take down that way of worship which had been at first settled by a power of miracles in Moses. God would not be so much wanting to the faith of that people which had received their Law by signs and wonders from Heaven, but that there should be as strong an evidence given to them, that the fulness of time was come when that dispensation was to have

have an *end*, and to give *place* to one more perfect, which was to be *established* instead of it. Upon which account the *Jews* might *rationally enquire* after a *sign* where any *new revelation* was discovered, which might null the *obligation* of any former *Law*: and when they enquire so much after a *sign*, our *Saviour* doth not reject the *enquiry* as in it self *unreasonable*, but as made in an *unreasonable* manner; for they would not be contented with the *miracles* which our *Saviour* wrought, which sufficiently manifested a *Divine power*; but all that they desired was, a *sign from heaven*, i. e. such as were done at the giving of the *Law*, the *thundring* and *lightnings* there; or, as the raining of *Manna in the Wilderness*; now our *Saviour* justly checks this demand as *importune* and *impudent*; partly as knowing upon what account they asked it, merely to tempt him; and not out of any real desire of *satisfaction*; and partly because of that *abundant evidence* which was given in the *miraculous cures* which were wrought by him, which were more suitable to that design of doing good in the world, than all the *Thunderclaps* on Mount *Sinai* were; neither were the people in a condition to be fed by *Manna* as they were in the wilderness, God graciously suiting the discoveries of his power to the peculiar advantages of the people which they were made to, and the dispensation they ushered in. Those terrible signs at Mount *Sinai* being very suitable to the severity and rigour of the *Law*: and the gracious miracles of our *Saviour*, to the sweetness and grace of the *Gospel*. And on this account our *Saviour* charged the *Jews* with *hypocrisie*, in requiring a superior, as something above *Nivius*, a prodigy rather than a miracle; An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given it but that of the Prophet *Jonas*, i. e. this people which are so far from the faith of *Abraham*, (and therefore are *supposititious Children*) that no miracles which I do, will convince them, but they seek only to have their humours gratified more than their faith confirmed by some prodigy from Heaven, shall not by me be thus gratified; but having done enough already to persuade them, if they had any heart to believe, instead of a sign from Heaven, they shall have only one from the Earth, and that not so much intended for the conversion of such wilfull Unbelievers, as for the testifying my Innocency to the world, viz. his resurrection from the

Matth. 12. 38.

16. 1.

Matth. 12. 39.



*the dead.* And so elsewhere when the *Jews* demand a *sign*, it was upon the doing of *that*, which if they had attended to, had been a sufficient *sign* to them, viz. *his driving the buyers and sellers out of the Temple*: Which being a *thing* permitted by the *Sanhedrin* and the *Priests*, how could they think so mean a *person*, in appearance, as our *Saviour* was, could ever have effected it, had it not been for a *Divine Majesty* and *Power* which appeared in him? It was not then the expectation of miracles which our *Saviour* rebuked in the *Jews*, but being unsatisfied with the kind and nature of our *Saviour's* miracles. It was their *hypocrisie* and *unbelief* which *Christ* condemned, notwithstanding the frequent miracles which he wrought among them: For we plainly find our *Saviour* very often appealing to his miracles as the evidences of his *Divine Commission*: If I had not done the works among them, which no man else did, they had not had sin, i. e. in not believing me. Whereby *Christ* both sets forth the necessity of his working miracles in order to the conviction of the world, and the greatness of the miracles which he wrought; he did those no man else had done, no not *Moses* and *Elias*, in curing all manner of diseases by the word of his mouth; and those miracles which they had done, he exceeded them in the manner of doing them. *Moses* fed them with bread from Heaven, but *Christ* multiplied on earth some few loaves and fishes, to the feeding of many thousands: *Elias* indeed raised one from the dead; but *Christ* raised more, and one after he had been four days in the grave. And upon this very evidence of our *Saviour's* miracles we find many believing on him. And even of those who were not so far wrought upon as to become followers of *Christ*, as the only *Messias*, yet we find them so far persuaded by the power of his miracles, that they looked upon him as a great *Prophet*, or one that was sent from God: So *Nicodemus*, who came first to *Christ* more as a rational enquirer than a believer, yet we see he was persuaded that he was a teacher come from God, because no man could do the miracles which *Christ* did, unless God were with him. And before him many of the *Jews* at *Jerusalem* believed in his name when they saw the miracles which he did; yet these persons *Christ* would not trust himself with, because he knew their hearts were not subdued to his doctrine, though their understandings were convinced by

Joh. 2. 18.

Joh. 5. 36.

10. 25.

Joh. 15. 24.

Joh. 1. 49.

2. 11.

Joh. 3. 2.

Joh. 2. 23.

his miracles. And after this others of the Jews that looked not on him as the *Messias*, yet it is said they believed on him on the account of his miracles. And many of the people believed on him, and said, *When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?* Although herein they were most unreasonable in believing the evidence, and not the truth attested by it, in believing Christ to be one sent from God by his miracles, and yet not believing him to be the *Messias*, which was the thing attested by them. Not that mere miracles would prove the person to be the *Messias* who did them, but the miracles proved the testimony to be Divine; now that which Christ delivered to them as a Divine Testimony, was his being the *Messias*, and therefore by the same reason they believed him to be one sent from God, they ought to have believed him to be the *Messias*; for one sent from God could never falsifie in the main of his message, as this was of our Saviour's preaching. And hence it is observable our Saviour did not shew forth his Divine power till he entered upon his office of preaching, thereby making it appear he intended this as the great evidence of the truth of the doctrine which he preached to them. And herein the blind man in the Gospel saw more truth and reason than the whole Court of Sankhedrin, before which in probability he was convented about his cure by Christ; for when they sought to get something out of him in disparagement of our Saviour's person and miracle, he sharply and roundly tells them, when they said they knew God spake to Moses, but for this fellow, we

Joh. 7. 31.

Joh. 9. 29, 30.  
ver. 33.

Ver. 31.

*Idolatry.*



Idolatry, which is meant by a worshipper of God, such a one God is present with, and we are bound to believe him. And for this very miracle, or curing one born blind, was the like ever heard of before? did ever *Moses* or the *Prophets* do it? Thus we see what strong rational evidence there was in this miracle of *Christ* in the judgment of this blind man, which he uttered with so much reason before the Court of *Sanhedrin*, when he knew how like he was to be excommunicated for it; and yet this very person was as yet ignorant that *Christ* was the true *Messias*, as appears by the sequel of the Chapter; but upon *Christ's* revelation of himself to him, he presently believed on him. How strangely irrational were the Jews then in rejecting our Saviour when his miracles not only exceeded those of *Moses* both in number and quality; but which was more, they saw themselves the miracles which *Christ* did, but they received those of *Moses* only upon the credit of their Fathers! And from the strength of the evidence arising from the power of miracles it is that *St. Peter* tells the promiscuous Assembly, *Act. 2. 22.* That *Jesus of Nazareth* was a man approved of God among them, by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of them, as they themselves also knew. He appeals to their own knowledge, which he would not certainly have done, had it not been in a case beyond all dispute among them. Which was a thing so notorious among them, that we find the *Pharisees* themselves confessing it, *What do we? For this man doth many miracles:* *Joh. 11. 47.* Now then in a Nation whose religion had been established by miracles, and the certainty of the truth of it, among those who then professed it, did depend so much upon the constant credit which the report of the miracles done at the settling of their Law had among them; what could be a more rational convincing way of proceeding, than for our Saviour to manifest by a greater power of miracles in himself the undoubted credentials of his commission from Heaven; and that he was the true *Messias*, which was foretold by their own most sacred and authentic records? Which will appear more,

Because the power of miracles did evidently declare that he was the very person promised. For if the exact correspondence of the event to the predictions in a Nation owning

them as *Divine*, be an undoubted evidence that they are exactly fulfilled, our Saviour was most certainly the person so often spoken of in the *Old Testament*. For many of the *Prophecies* of the *Old Testament* concerning the *Messias*, if they were not fulfilled in *Christ*, in the conditions the *Jews* have been in since their dispersion, (which fell out exactly according to the prediction of *Christ*) it is impossible they should be fulfilled at all. So that either the predictions must lose their divine authority, or they must be accomplished in our blessed Saviour. For as *Tertullian* sharply says to the *Jews*, *Redde statum Judææ quem Christus inveniat, & alium contende venire*; Let the people of the *Jews* be in their former condition, and then plead for a *Messias* to come. For can any thing be more plain than that the *Messias* was to be born in *Bethlehem* of *Judæa*? but where is that now, and how long since the *Jews* enjoyed any civil *Polity* there? what is become of the second *Temple*, in the time of which the desire of all Nations should come? Is not *Jerusalem* already destroyed, and the oblation there long since ceased, which was to come to pass so soon after the *Messias*, and did accordingly? Is not the *Scepter* yet departed from *Judah*, and the *Lawgiver* from between his feet, and is not *Shiloh* yet come? What strange unintelligible weeks were those of *Daniel*, if they were extended to so indefinite a space of time as the *Jews* pretend? and if indefinite, what certain ground could from thence be gathered of any time wherein their accomplishment was to be expected? but not to expatiate on those things which are already so largely proved beyond all possibility of contradiction, by the ancient and modern learned Writers against the *Jews*: To insist therefore on our present business; are not the *Prophecies* concerning the miracles which the *Messias* should work, exactly fulfilled in *Christ*? Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an Hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. He must be a great stranger in the History of the *New Testament* that is to seek for an exact fulfilling of this Prophecy. Nay, and the *Jewish Midrash*, upon *Psal.* 146. 8. saith, that when *Messias* comes, he should open the eyes of the blind; and the *Jews* themselves often speak of the great miracles which the *Messias* should doe when he appears; and therefore out of their own mouths will they

C. *Judaos*, c. 13.

Ira. 35. 5, 6.

V. *Grot.* in *Joh.*  
9. 32.



be condemned, when the miracles of Christ make it so evident that he was the true Messiah. Hence when John Baptist sent his Disciples to Christ for them to be fully satisfied concerning him, Christ gives this answer to them; he bids them tell him, *the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, and the Lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, &c.* as though the mentioning of these miracles was sufficient to make it appear to them who he was whom they came to enquire after. And therefore it is observable that John Baptist himself, though greater than the Prophets, nay, than whom there was not a greater born of women, by our Saviour's own Testimony; yet of him it is said, that he wrought no miracle: of which no account can be given so probable and rational, as that God in his infinite wisdom was pleased so to order it, that the evidence of our Saviour's being the Messiah might be made more clear by the miracles which he wrought; that the minds of people might not be distracted between John and Christ; he therefore reserved the glory of miracles wholly to the name of Christ, that there might be no pretence of competition between John and him.

Another reason of the necessity of miracles in our Saviour by way of rational evidence, is, the overthrowing the power and kingdom of the Devil in the world. For which purpose it is observable that the Devil had scarce ever greater power over the bodies of men as well as their souls, than at that time; thence we read of such a multitude of demoniacks in the Gospel. For it seems very harsh to interpret those merely of Epileptical and Lunatick persons, both because the *δαίμονιζόμενοι*, and *σεληνιαζόμενοι*, and *ῥεαλισμοὶ*, are mentioned distinctly, and that it appears by the primitive Church afterwards how frequent it was to eject the Devil out of possessed persons. Nay, so far am I from thinking that the Demoniacs were mere Lunaticks, that I rather think with Vossius that the Lunaticks were truly Demoniacs, only they were not constantly under the power of the Devil, but as their paroxysms returned upon them, the Devil loving to fish in such troubled waters. And thence the same person is called a Lunatick in one place, who is called a Demoniack in another; because he did *ruere in principiis lunationum*, as the Arabick version expresseth it; or as Rusticus Elpidius more fully explains it,

Self. 4.  
3.

Matth. 4. 24.

De Idolat. l. 2.  
c. 19.

Mat. 17. 14.  
Luke 9. 39.

Lib. 5.

*Reperat in medium rabies horrenda furoris  
 Daemonis afflatu, propria qui peste nocivus  
 Allidit captas fædo discrimine mentes,  
 Menstrua deciduos cum Luna recolligit ignes.*

Matt. 8. 28.

Theophylact is of opinion, that the Jews in the time of our Saviour supposed, that the souls of dead men became Demons, and thence we read in Scripture of the Demoniacs among the Tombs: but it is far more probable which Grotius conceives, that the Jews were of opinion, that the souls of dead men did hover up and down about their bodies, and that these were so long under the Devils power, which many of the Jews to this day believe and make use of the instance of the Pythons raising Samuel; on which account the Devils to favour an opinion so advantageous to their interest, might appear with greater terror and fury about their burying places, as we see they did in those possessed persons. But on whatever account it was, we find it evident that about the time of our Saviour's appearance, and some time after, the truly *ἐνεργήσαντες* were very frequent; whether it were that the Devil by such frequent possessions of persons, and making them to do such strange things, might thereby endeavour to invalidate the evidence of our Saviour's miracles (from whence it is probable the Pharisees raised their calumny, that Christ did miracles by Beelzebub, because they saw so many strange appearances caused by possessed persons) or whether it were through the admirable providence of God, which might give Satan the greater liberty at that time, on purpose to heighten the glory of our Saviour in dispossessing of him, and thereby to give the highest rational evidence, that his power was of God, which tended so much to the destruction of the Kingdom of Satan.

Sect. 5.

And hence the Primitive Christians did so much triumph, and as it were insult over the Devil where-ever they found him, making him to remove his lodgings from possessed persons, by a writ of ejection from the name of Christ. Thence Origen rationally concludes that Christ had his power given him from above, because at his very name the Devils forsook the bodies which they had possessed, *Εἰ γὰρ μὴ ἐξέθεν ἦν αὐτῷ δούλοισι*

Orig. c. Cels. l. 3.

*σῶματις, καὶ ἂν καὶ δαίμονες πρὸς ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ ἀπαγγελλομένη μόνον*  
*εἰκονήτες*



εἰκοσις ἀνεχάσεν ἀπὸ τοῦ καὶ αὐτοῦ πολεμικοῦ. And heelsewhere tells us, that even the meanest sort of *Christians* without any ceremony, but merely by their prayers, did ordinarily eject the Devil out of mens bodies : ὡς ἐπὶ πάντων ἵδεται τὸ πρῶτον παρὰ τῶν

Lib. 7.

παιδείας τῶν ἐν τῷ λόγῳ χρεῖς χάρις τὸ καὶ δαιμόνων εὐτελὲς καὶ ἀδυνάτους, ἢ πάντως δούλων πρὸς τὸ ἡγήνησθαι καὶ εἶχαν ὑπεξελεῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ καὶ ἀνδρώπῃ καὶ σώματι σοφὴ πνὶ καὶ δυνατὴ ἐν τῷ λογικαῖς πρὸς τὸ πρῶτον ὑποδείξει.

Ordinary *Christians*, saith he, most commonly do this, the Grace of *Christ* by its word thereby discovering the contemptibleness and infirmity of the Devils, that in order to their ejection they did not so much as want any learned or experienced *Christian*.

And for this they appeal to the *Heathens* themselves, as appears not only by the challenge of *Tertullian* already mentioned, but by the *Testimony* of almost

all of them who have writ against the *Heathens* in vindication of the *Christian Religion*. Thence *Minutius Felix*, *Hæc omnia sciunt plerique, pars vestrum, ipsos dæmonas de semetipsis confiteri, quoties à nobis tormentis verborum, & orationis incendiis de corporibus exiguntur. Ipse Saturnus & Serapis, & Jupiter, & quicquid dæmonum colitis, victi dolore quod sunt eloquuntur, nec utique in turpitudinem sui nonnullis præsertim vestrum assistentibus, mentiuntur. Ipsis testibus eos esse Dæmonas, de se verum confitentibus credite; adjurati enim per Deum verum & solum, inviti, miseri corporibus inhorrescunt; & vel exiliunt statim, vel evanescent gradatim, prout fides patientis adjuvat, aut gratia curantis aspirat.* Can we now

P. 31. ed. Ouz.

think the Devil should not only forsake his Tyranny over the bodies of men, but let go so advantageous a pillar of his tyranny over the consciences of men in Idolatrous worship, as the concealing himself was, had he not been forced to it by a power far greater than his own? So *Cyprian ad Demetrianum*, appeals to him being the Proconsul of *Africa*, about the same thing (who had written sharply against the *Christians*) for speaking of the Devils whom they worshipped in their Idols. *O si audire eos velles & videre, quando à nobis adjurantur & torquentur Spiritualibus flagris & verborum tormentis de obsessis corporibus ejiciuntur, quando ejulantes & gementes voce humana, & potestate divina flagella & verbera sentientes, venturum judicium confitentur; veni & cognosce vera esse quæ dicimus: and a little after, videbis sub manu nostra*

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Ad Demetr  
f. 12.

nostra

*nostra stare vinctos, & tremere captivos, quos tu suspicis & veneraris ut Dominos.* Did ever any of the Heathen Magicians (of which there were good store) extort such things from the Devils, as the Christians did, merely by their prayers, and invocations of the name of God and Christ? did they ever make them confess to be what they were, not only in possessed bodies but in their Temples too? that was beyond the power of their Ephesian letters, or any of their Magical incantations. Did the Devils ever dread so much the name of Socrates or Aristides as they did that of God and of Christ? Of which

*De justitia. lib.*  
*5. c. 21.*

*Lactantius thus speaks, Quo audito tremunt, exclamant, & uri se verberarique testantur, & interrogati qui sint, quando venerint, quando in hominem irreperint, consentitur sic extorti, & excruciatii virtute divini numinis exulant; propter hæc verbera & minas, sanctos & justos viros semper oderunt.* And even Apollo himself at the name of Christ trembled as much as ever the Pythian Prophetess did in her greatest furies; so Prudentius tells us.

*Torquetur Apollo*

*Apotheos.*

*Nomine percussus Christi, nec fulmina verbi  
Ferre potest; agitant miserum tot verbera linguae,  
Quot laudata Dei resonant miracula Christi.*

*De errore prof.*  
*relig.*

To these we may add what Firmicus saith to the same purpose, *Ecce Dæmon est quem colis; cum Dei & Christi ejus nomen audierit, contremiscit, & ut interrogantibus nobis respondeat trepidantia verba, vix se colligit; adhærens homini laceratur, uritur, vapulat, & statim de commissis sceleribus confitetur.* By which Testimonies it appears what power over Satan, when he was in his Kingdom, the Christians by the power of Christ had; not as though the bare name of Christ had so great an efficacy in the ejection of Devils, as Origen seems to be of opinion (in a discourse about the efficacy of names, unworthy of so great a Philosopher) but that God might manifest to the world the truth that was contained in that name, he did give a power to such as made use of it, of working miracles by it. And thence we read in Scripture, that some who were not thoroughly Christians, but yet professed the truth of the Gospel, and that what they did was for the honour of Christ, had a power of casting out Devils and doing many wonderful things through his name.

*L. I. c. Gels.*

*M. tt. 7. c. 2.*

By



By these and many other testimonies which might be produced out of the *Primitive Church*, we find an exact accomplishment of our *Saviour's* promise to his *Disciples* when he took his leave of them : *And these signs shall follow them that believe, In my name shall they cast out Devils, &c.* This power then in the *Primitive Church* had a twofold argument in it, both as it was a manifestation of the truth of the predictions of our *Saviour*, and as it was an evidence of the *Divine power* of *Christ*, when his name so long after his *ascension* had so great a command over all the *infernal spirits* ; and that so evidently, that at that time when the *Christians* did as it were *Tyrannize* over *Satan* so in his own territories, yet then the greatest of his *Magicians* had no power to hurt the bodies of the *Christians*, which is a thing *Origen* takes much notice of. For when *Celsus* saith from *Diogenes Aegyptius* that *Magick* could only hurt ignorant and wicked men, and had no power over *Philosophers* ; *Origen* replies, first, that *Philosophy* was no such charm against the power of *Magick*, as appears by *Mæragenes* who writ the story of *Apollonius Tyanæus*, the famous *Magician* and *Philosopher*, who therein mentions how *Euphrates* and an *Epicurean* (ὁ ἀφροῦς φιλόσοφος, no vulgar Philosophers ) were caught by the *Magick* of *Apollonius*, (and although *Philostatus* disown this *History* of *Mæragenes* as *fabulous*, yet he that thinks *Philostatus* for that, to be of any greater credit, is much deceived, of whom *Lud. Vives* gives this true character, *De trad. disc.* that he doth magna Homeri mendacia majoribus mendaciis corrigere, mend one hole and make three,) but, saith *Origen*, as to the *Christians*, this is undoubtedly true : Διαβεβαίμεθα ὅτι ἡμεῖς, *Cont. Cels. l. 6.* καὶ τῇ πίστει ὡρξαμένοι, ὅτι οἱ καὶ χριστιανισμὸν διὰ τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ ὅπου ποῦ διακρίνομεν, καὶ οἱ καὶ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον αὐτῶν καὶ ποῦ καὶ οἱ καὶ ἐν ταῖς συνεχέουσιν καὶ δύνανται νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας χαράσσειν, ὅτι μαγεία ἔτε δαμονίους εἶναι αἰσθάνομαι. This, saith he, we are most certain of, and have found it by experience true, that those who according to the principles of Christianity do worship God over all, through Jesus, and do live according to the Gospel, being constant in their solemn prayers night and day, are not obnoxious to the power of any *Magick* or *Devils* whatsoever. Now then if the *Devil* who had then so much power over others, had none upon the true followers of *Christ* ; and if instead of that they had so great a commanding power over the *Devil* even in things

Sett. 6.

Mark 16. 17.

De trad. disc. l. 5.

Cont. Cels. l. 6. P. 302.

which tended most to his *disadvantage*, not only *dislodging* him out of *bodies*, but out of his *Idolatrous Temples*; what can be more *evident*, than that this *power* which was so *efficacious* for the overthrowing the *Kingdom of Satan*, must needs be far greater than the *power of Satan* is? For it is an undoubted *Maxim* in natural reason, That *what-ever is put out of its former place by force and violence, is extruded by something stronger than its self*; for if the *force* on either side were *equal*, there could be no *dispossessing* of either; if any thing then be cast out of its former *possession* *unwillingly*, it is an *undeniable* proof there was some *power* greater than *his* who was *dispossessed*. Now we cannot conceive, if there be such *malignant spirits*, as by many *undeniable* proofs it is evident there are, that they should willingly *quit* their *possessions* to such a *doctrine* which tends to the *unavoidable ruine* of their *interest* in the world; if then the *power* of this *doctrine* hath *overthrown* the *Devil's Kingdom* in the world, where-ever it hath been truly *entertained*, it must necessarily follow, that this *power* is far above the *power* of any *damned spirits*. Now what *folly* and *madness* was it in the *Heathens* to worship those for *Gods*, which they could not but see, if they would open their eyes, were under so great *slavery* to a *power* above them, which could make *them* confess what was most to their *disadvantage* in the *presence* of their great *adorers*?

Sett. 7.

Neither ought the many *counterfeits* and *impostures* which have been in the world in this kind since the *establishment* of *Christian Religion* (among the *advancers* of particular *interests* and *designs*) make us *suspect* the *truth* of those things which were done in the first *Ages* of the *Church of Christ*. For, first, it *stands* to the *greatest reason*, that the strongest arguments for the *truth* of a *Religion* ought to be *fetched* from the *ages* of its first *appearance* in the world; if then the *evidence* be *undoubted* as to those *first times*, we ought to embrace our *Religion* as *true*, *what-ever* the *impostures* have been among those who have apparently *gone aside* from that *purity* and *simplicity* of the *Gospel*, which had so great *power*. Then, secondly, if all that hath been done in this kind of *ejecting Devils*, where *Christianity* is owned, be acknowledged for *impostures*: one of these *two things* must be supposed as the *ground* of it: either that there was no such *thing* as a *real possession* by the *Devil*,



*vil*, or else there was no such thing as a *dispossessing him*; If the *first*, then hereby will be seen a *confirmation* of our former *argument*, that where *Christianity* is owned, by the *power* of that, the *Devil* is more *curbed* and *restrained*, than where it is not, or else is much *over-run* with *ignorance* and *superstition*. Of the *latter*, the *ages* of the *Christian Church*, from the *10th Century* to the beginning of the *16th Current*, are a *clear evidence*; Of the *first*, all those who have been *conversant* in the places where *Paganism* or *gross Idolatry* do yet reign, will bring in their *creditable testimonies*, how *tyrannical* the *power* of the *Devil* is yet among them. If it be not so then, where carefull *endeavours* have been used for *retrieving* the *ancient purity* of *Christian doctrine* and *worship*, we ought to *impute* it to the *power* of him who is *stronger* than *Satan*, who where-ever he comes to *dwell*, doth *dispossess* him of his former *habitations*. If the *second* then be *entertained* as the *ground* of *concluding* all things as *impostures*, which are accounted *dispossessions* of *Satan*, viz. *that he never is really dispossessed*; then it must either be said, that where he is once *seized*, there is no *possibility* of *ejecting* him; which is to say, that the *Devil* hath an *absolute* and *infinite power*, and that there is no *power* greater than his, which is to own him for *God*; or else that *God* suffers him to *tyrannize* where and how he will, which is contrary to *Divine providence*, and the *care* *God* takes of the *world*, and of the *good* of *mankind*; or else, *lastly*, that those *persons* who *pretend* to do it, are not such *persons* who are *armed* so much with the *power* of *Christ*, nor *possessed* with such a *due spirit* of the *Gospel*, which hath *command* over these *infernal spirits*. And this in the *cases* pretended by the great *Juglers* and *Impostures* of the *Christian world*, the *Popish Priests* have been so *notorious*, that none of their own *party* of any great *faith* or *credit* would stand to *vouch* them. And we have this *impregnable argument* against all such *Impostures*, that the *matters* which they by such *actions* would give an *evidence* to, being so *vastly different* from, if not in some things *diametrically opposite* to the *first delivery* and *design* of the *Christian faith*, it is *inconsistent* with the *way* used for the *confirmation* of *Christian Religion* in the *first publishing* of it, to attest the *truth* of such *things* by any *real miracles*: For so it would *invalidate* the *great force* of the *evidences* of the *truth* of *Christianity*, if

the same argument should be used for the *proving* of that which in the judgment of any impartial person was not *delivered*, when the *truth* of the doctrine of Christ was confirmed by so many and *uncontroled* miracles. But hereby we see what *unconceivable* prejudice hath been done to the *true primitive doctrine* of the Gospel; and what *stumbling-blocks* have been laid in the way of *considerative* persons, to keep them from embracing the truly *Christian faith*, by those who would be thought the *infallible directors* of men in it, by making use of the *broad-seal* of Heaven (set only to the *truth* of the Scriptures) to confirm their *unwritten* and *superstitious* ways of worship. For if I once see that which I looked on as an *undoubted evidence* of *Divine power*, brought to attest any thing directly contrary to *Divine revelation*; I must either conclude that God may contradict himself by sealing both parts of a contradiction, which is both *blasphemous* and *impossible*; or that that society of men which own such things, is not at all tender of the honour of *Christian doctrine*, but seeks to set up an *interest* contrary to it, and matters not what *disadvantage* is done to the grounds of Religion by such *unworthy pretences*; and which of these two is more rational and true, let every one's conscience judge. And therefore it is much the *interest* of the *Christian World* to have all such *frauds* and *impostures* discovered, which do so much *disservice* to the *Christian Faith*, and are such *secret fomenters* of *Atheism* and *Infidelity*. But how far that promise of our Saviour, *That they which believe in his name, shall cast out Devils, and do many miracles*, may extend even in these last ages of the world to such *generous* and *primitive-spirited Christians*, who out of a great and deep sense of the *truth* of Christianity and *tenderness* to the souls of men, should go among *Heathens* and *Infidels* to convert them only to Christ (and not to a secular interest, under pretence of an *infallible head*) is not here a place fully to enquire. I confess I cannot see any reason why God may not yet for the *conviction* of *Infidels*, employ such a *power* of miracles, although there be not such necessity of it, as there was in the first propagation of the Gospel, there being some evidences of the *power* of Christianity now, which were not so clear then, (as the *over-throwing the Kingdom of Satan in the world*; the *prevailing of Christianity*, notwithstanding force used against it; the recovery of it from amidst

Mat. 16. 17.



*all the corruptions which were mixed with it; the consent of those parties in the common foundations of Christianity, which yet disagree from each other with great bitterness of spirit,) though I say it be not of that necessity now, when the Scriptures are conveyed to us in a certain uninterrupted manner; yet God may please out of his abundant provision for the satisfaction of the minds of men, concerning the truth of Christian doctrine, to employ good men to do something which may manifest the power of Christ to be above the Devil's, whom they worship. And therefore I should far sooner believe the relation of the miracles of Xaverius and his Brethren, employed in the conversion of Infidels, than Lipsius his Virgo Hallensis and Asprecollis, could it but be made evident to me that the design of those persons had more of Christianity than Popery in it; that is, that they went more upon a design to bring the souls of the Infidels to Heaven, than to enlarge the authority and jurisdiction of the Roman Church.*

But what-ever the truth of those miracles, or the design of those persons were, we have certain and undoubted evidence of the truth of those miracles, whereby Christianity was first propagated, and the Kingdom of Satan over-thrown in the world; Christ thereby making it appear that his power was greater than the Devil's, who had possession, because he over-came him, took from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divided his spoils; i.e. dispossessed him of mens bodies, and his Idolatrous Temples, silenced his Oracles, nonplust his Magicians, and at last, when Christianity had overcome by suffering, wrested the worldly Power and Empire out of the Devil's hands, and employed it against himself. Neither may we think, because since that time the Devil hath got some ground in the world again by the large spread of Mahometism, and the general corruptions in the Christian world, that therefore the other was no argument of Divine power; because the truth of Christianity is not tied to any particular places; because such a falling away hath been foretold in the Scripture, and therefore the truth of them is proved by it, and because God himself hath threatned that those who will not receive the truth in the love of it, shall be given up to strong delusions. Doth not this then in stead of abating the strength of the argument, confirm it more, and that nothing is fallen out in the Christian world, but what was fore-

*Sect. 8.*

*Luk. 11. 21, 22.*

foretold by those whom God employed in the converting of it? But we are neither without some fair *hopes* even from that *Divine revelation* which was sealed by *uncontroled evidence*, that there may be yet a *time to come* when *Christ* will recover his *Churches* to their *pristine purity* and *simplicity*; but withall, I think we are not to measure the *future felicity* of the *Church* by outward *splendor* and *greatness* (which too many so strongly *fanſie*) but by a *recovery* of that true *spirit* of *Christianity* which *breathed* in the *first ages* of the *Church*, what-ever the outward *condition* of the *Church* may be: For if *worldly greatness*, and *ease*, and *riches*, were the first *impairers* of the *purity* of *Christian Religion*, it is hard to *conceive* how the *restoring* of the *Church* of *Christ* to its true *glory*, can be by the *advancing* of *that*, which gives so *great* an *occasion* to *pride* and *sensuality*, which are so *contrary* to the *design* of *Christian Religion*; unless we suppose men free from those *corruptions*, which continual *experience* still tells the *world* the *Rulers* as well as *Members* of the *Christian Society* are *subject* to. Neither may that be *wondered* at, when such *unevenness* of *parts* is now discovered in the *great Luminaries* of the *world*, and the *Sun* himself is found to have his *maculae*, as though the *Sun* had a *purple Fever*, or as *Kircher* expresseth it, *Ipse Phœbus, qui rerum omnium in universo naturæ Theatro aspectabilem longè pulcherrimus omnium opinione est habitus, hoc seculo tandem fumosa facie, ac infecto vultu maculis prodiit; diceret eum variolis laborare senescentem*: I speak not this as though an outward *flourishing condition* of the *Church* were *inconsistent* with its *purity*; for then the *way* to *refine* it, were to throw it into the *flames* of *persecution*; but that the *advancement* of the *flourishing condition* of the *Church*, is not merely by outward *pomp* and *grandeur*, and that the *purity* of the *Church* is not *inconsistent* with a state of *outward difficulties*, which the *experience* of the *Primitive Church* gives an *irrefragable demonstration* of. Thus much may serve to shew the *necessity* of a *power* of *miracles*, conjoyned with the *Christian doctrine*, to manifest the *truth* of it by overthrowing the *Kingdom* of that great *Antichrist* the *Devil*, who had usurped so much *Tyranny* over the *World*.

Propyl. Agonist.  
ad Oedipum,  
cap. 2.



The last reason why a power of miracles was so necessary for confirming the truth of the Gospel, is, *because the Gospel was to be propagated over the world without any other rational evidence than was contained in the miracles wrought for the confirmation of it.* Now the admirable success which this doctrine found in the world, considering all the circumstances of it, do make it clear what certainty there was that the miracles which were wrought were true, and they were certain evidences that the doctrine attested by them was from God. Now this will appear from these two things:

Self. 9.

*That no rational account can be given why the Apostles should undertake to publish such a doctrine, unless they had been undoubtedly certain that the Doctrine was true, and they had sufficient evidence to persuade others to believe it.*

1.

*That no satisfactory account can be given, considering the nature of the doctrine of Christ, and the manner of its propagation, why it should meet with so great acceptance in the world, had there not been such convincing evidence as might fully persuade men of the truth of it.*

2.

I begin with the first, from the publishers of this doctrine in the world. All that I here require by way of a *Postulatum* or supposition, are only these two things, which no man right in his wits I suppose will deny: 1. *That men are so far rational agents, that they will not set upon any work of moment and difficulty, without sufficient grounds inducing them to it; and by so much the greater the work is, the more sure and steadfast had the grounds need to be which they proceed upon.* 2. *That the Apostles or first Publishers of the Christian Doctrine were not men distracted, or bereft of their wits, but acted by principles of common sense, reason and understanding, as other men in the world do:* Which if any one should be so far beside his wits as to question, if he have but patience and understanding enough to read and consider those admirable writings of theirs which are conveyed to us by as certain uninterrupted a Tradition as any thing in the world hath been, by that time he will see cause to alter his judgment, and to say that they are not mad, but speak the words of the greatest truth and soberness. These things supposed, I now proceed to the proving of the thing in hand, which will be done by these three things; First, *That the Apostles could not but know how hazardous an employment the preaching*

1.

preaching

*preaching of the Gospel would be to them. Secondly, That no motive can be conceived sufficient for them to undertake such an employment, but the infalible truth of the doctrine which they preached. Thirdly, That the greatest assurance they had themselves of the truth of their Doctrine, was by being eye-witnesses of the miracles of Christ.*

*First, That the Apostles could not but understand the hazard of their employment, notwithstanding which they cheerfully undertook it. That men armed with no external power, nor cried up for their wit and learning, and carrying a doctrine with them so contrary to the general inclinations of the world, having nothing in it to recommend it to mankind but the truth of it, should go about to persuade the world to part with the Religion they owned, and was settled by their Laws, and to embrace such a Religion as called them off from all the things they loved in this world, and to prepare themselves by mortification and self-denial for another world, is a thing to humane reason incredible, unless we suppose them acted by a higher spirit than mankind is ordinarily acted by. For what is there so desirable in continual reproaches and contumelies? what delight is there in racks and prisons? what agreeableness in flames and martyrdoms to make men undergo some, nay all of these rather than disown that doctrine which they came to publish? Yet these did the Apostles cheerfully undergo in order to the conversion of the world to the truth of that doctrine which they delivered to it. And not only so, but though they did foresee them, they were not discouraged from this undertaking by it. I confess, when men are upon hopes of profit and interest in the world, engaged upon a design which they promise themselves impunity in, having power on their side, though afterwards things should fall out contrary to their expectation, such persons may die in such a cause, because they must, and some may carry it out with more resolution, partly through an innate fortitude of spirit, heightened with the advantages of Religion, or an Enthusiastick temper. But it is hard to conceive that such persons would have undertaken so hazardous an employment, if before-hand they had fore-seen what they must have under-gone for it. But now the Apostles did fore-know that bonds and imprisonment, nay death it self must be under-gone in a violent manner, for the sake of the doctrine which*  
they



they preached ; yet notwithstanding all this, they go *boldly* and with *resolution* on with their *work*, and give not *over* because of any *hardships* and *persecutions* they met withall. One of the chiefest of them, *St. Peter*, and as forward as any in *Joh. 21. 19.* Preaching the *Gospel*, had the very manner of his *death* foretold him by *Christ* himself, before his *Ascension* ; yet soon after we find him preaching *Christ* in the *midst* of those who had crucified him, and telling them to their *faces* the *greatness* of their *sin* in it, and appealing to the *miracles* which *Christ* had done among them, and bidding them *repent* and be- *Act. 2. 22, 23,* lieve in him whom they had crucified, if ever they would be saved : *38.* And this he did, not only among the *people* who gave their *consent* to the *crucifying* of *Christ* ; but soon after, being *con-* *Act. 3. 14, 15,* *16, 19.* *vented* together with *John*, before the *Court* of *Sanhedrin* *Act. 4. 5.* (probably the very same which not long before had sentenced *Christ* to death) for a *miracle* wrought by them, with what *Act. 4. 10, 12.* *incredible boldness* doth he to their *faces* tell them of their *murdering Christ* ; and withall, that there was no other way to *salvation* but by him whom they had crucified ! *Be it known unto you all* (saith *Peter* to the *Sanhedrin*) *and to all the people of Israel*, that by the name of *Jesus Christ* whom ye have crucified, whom *God* raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. Neither is there *salvation* in any other : for there is none other name under *Heaven* given among men whereby we must be saved. What an *heroick freedom* of *spirit* appears in these words ! what *magnanimity* and *courage* was there now in that *person*, who durst in the face of this *Court* tell them of their *murther*, and that there was no *salvation* but by him whom they had crucified ! Well might they wonder at the *boldness* of the men, who feared not the same *death* which they had so lately brought their *Lord* and *Master* to.

Neither was this singly the *case* of *Peter* and *John*, but all the rest of the *Apostles* undertook their work with the same *resolution* and *preparation* of *Spirit* to undergo the greatest *hardship* in the world for the sake of the *truths* they *Preached*. And accordingly as far as *Ecclesiastical History* can ascertain us of it, they did all but *John* (and that to make good the *pre-* *Joh. 21. 22.* *diction* of *Christ*) suffer *violent deaths* by the hands of those who persecuted them merely for their *doctrine*. And which is

Matth. 10. 17,  
18, 21, 22, 28.

Plat. Phæd.

most observable, when *Christ* designed them first of all for this work, he told them before-hand of *reproaches, persecutions, all manner of hardships*, nay of death it self, which they must undergo for his sake. All that he gave them by way of *encouragement*, was, that they could only kill the body and not the soul, and therefore that they should fear him only who could destroy both body and soul in Hell; all the support they had, was, an expectation in another world, and that animated them to go through all the hardships of this. Where do we ever read of any such boldness and courage in the most knowing Philosophers of the Heathens? with what faintness and misgiving of mind doth *Socrates* speak in his famous discourse supposed to be made by him before his death? how uncertainly doth he speak of a state of immortality? and yet in all probability *Plato* set it forth with all advantages imaginable. Where do we ever find that ever any of the great friends of *Socrates*, who were present at his death, as *Phædo*, *Cebes*, *Crito* and *Simmias*, durst enter the *Areopagus*, and condemn them there for the murder of *Socrates*, though this would be far short of what the Apostles did? why were they not so charitable as to inform the world better of those grand truths of the being of God and immortality of Souls, if at least they were fully convinced of them themselves? Why did not *Plato* at least speak out, and tell the world the truth, and not disguise his discourses under feigned names, the better to avoid accusation and the fate of *Socrates*? how doth he mince his excellent matter, and plays as it were at Bo-peep with his Readers, sometimes appearing and then pulling in his horns again? It may not be an improbable conjecture that the death of *Socrates* was the foundation of the Academy: I mean of that cautelous doctrine of withholding assent, and being both pro and con, sometimes of this side, and sometimes of that: for *Socrates* his death hath made all his friends very fearfull of being too dogmatical. And *Plato* himself had too much riches, and withall too much of a Courtier in him to hazard the dear prison of his soul, viz. his body, merely for an æthereal vehicle. He had rather let his soul flutter up and down in terrestrial matter, or the cage it was pent up in, than hazard too violent an opening of it by the hands of the *Areopagus*. And the great Roman Orator, among the rest of *Plato's* sentiments, had learnt this too; for although in his

discour-



*discourses* he hath many times sufficiently laid open the folly of the Heathen worship and Theology, yet he knows how to bring himself off safe enough with the people; and will be sure to be dogmatical only in this, *That nothing is to be innovated in the Religion of a Commonwealth*, and that the customs of our Ancestors are inviolably to be observed. Which principles, had they been true as they were safe for the persons who spake them, the Christian Religion had never gained any entertainment in the world; for where-ever it came, it met with this potent prejudice that it was looked on as an innovation, and therefore was shrewdly suspected by the Governours of Commonwealths, and the Preachers of it punished as factious and seditious persons; which was all the pretext the wise Politicians of the world had for their cruel and inhumane persecutions of such multitudes of peaceable and innocent Christians. Now when these things were fore-told by the Apostles themselves before their going abroad so plainly, that with the same faith they did believe the doctrine they Preached to be true, they must believe that all these things should come to pass, what courage and magnanimity of spirit was it in them thus to encounter dangers and as it were court the flames? Nay and before the time was come that they must die, to seal the truth of their doctrine, their whole life was a continual peregrination, wherein they were as so many Jobs in pilgrimage, encountred with perils and dangers on every side; of which one of the most painfull and successfull, St. Paul, hath given in such a large inventory of his perils, that the very reading of them were enough to undo a poor Epicurean Philosopher, and at once to spoil him of the two pillars of his happiness, the quietness of his mind and ease of his body. Thus we see what a hazardous employment that was which the Apostles went upon, and that it was such as they very well understood the difficulty of before they set upon it.

2 Cor. 6. 4, 5,  
8, 9.

Secondly, *We cannot find out any rational motive which could carry them through so hazardous an employment, but the full convictions of their minds of the undoubted truth and certainty of the doctrine which they delivered.* We find before that no vulgar motives in the world could carry them upon that design which they went upon; Could they be led by ambition and vain-glory, who met with such reproaches where-ever they

Sect. II.

went ; and not only persecutions of the tongue, but the sharper ones of the hands too ? we never read of any but the *Primitive Christians* who were ambitious of being *Martyrs*, and thought long till they were in the flames : which made *Arrius Antonius* being *Pro-consul* of *Asia*, when *Christians* in multitudes beset his tribunal and thronged in to be condemned, say to

*Tertul. ad Scapul. c. 5.* them, ὦ θεῖοι, εἰ θέλετε ἀποθνήσκειν, κερμῆς ἢ βέβηλος ἔχετε. O miserable people, had not ye ways enough to end your lives at home, but ye must croud for an execution ! This was a higher ambition by far than any of those *mancia gloriae*, those *Chamaeleons* that lived on the breath of applause, the Heathen Philosophers ever reached to, who were, as *Tertullian* expresseth it, *homines gloriae & eloquentiae solius libidinosi*, unsatiable thirsters after the honour and eloquence of the world ; but the Spirit of a Christian did soar too high to quarry on so mean a prey.

*Apolog. c. 47.*

When the more sober Heathens had taken a stricter notice of the carriages and lives of the Preachers of the Gospel and all their genuine followers, they instead of the common and rude name of impostures, gave them a more civil title of Philosophers, and looked upon their doctrine as a sublimer kind of Philosophy, *Non utique divinum negotium existimant sed magis Philosophiae genus*, as *Tertullian* tells us, because the Philosophers pretended so much to moral virtues which they saw the Christians so excellent in ; but as *Tertullian* there replies, *Nomen hoc Philosophorum Daemonia non fugat*, The Devil was never afraid of a Philosopher's beard, nor were diseases cured by the touch of a Philosophick pallium. There was something more Divine in Christians than in the grave Philosophers ; and that not only in reference to their lives, and the Divine power which was seen in them, but in reference to the truth and certainty of their doctrine, it being a true character given of both, by that same excellent Writer in behalf of the Christians of his time : *Veritatem Philosophi quidem affectant, possident autem*

*Apolog. c. 46.*

*Christiani ; What the Philosophers desired only, the Christians enjoy*, which was Truth : and as he elsewhere more fully speaks, *Mimicè Philosophi affectant veritatem, & affectando corrumpunt, ut qui gloriam captant ; Christiani eam necessario appetunt & integri praestant, ut qui saluti suae curant*. Truth is the Philosopher's mistress, which by courting he vitiates and corrupts, looking at nothing but his own glory : but truth is the Christian's

*Ad Nationes, l. 1. c. 4.*

*Matron,*

*Apol. c. 46.*



*Matron, whose directions he observes and follows, because he regards no glory but that to come. And to let them further see what a difference there was between a Christian and a Philosopher, he concludes that discourse with these words, Quid adeo simile Philosophus & Christianus? Græciæ Discipulus & cæli? famæ negotiator & vitæ? verborum & factorum operator? rerum ædificator & destructor? amicus & inimicus erroris? veritatis interpolator & integrator? furator ejus & custos? As much distance (saith he) as there is between Greece and Heaven, between applause and eternal glory, between words and things, between building and destroying, between truth and error, between a plagiarist and corrupter of truth, and a preserver and advancer of it; so much is there between a Philosopher and a Christian. The Heathens might suspect indeed some kind of affinity between the first Preachers of the Gospel and the ancient Sophists of Greece, because of their frequent going from place to place, and pretending a kind of Enthusiasm as they did: but as much difference as there is between a Knight-Errant and Hercules, between a Mountebank and Hippocrates, that and much greater there is between a Greek Sophist and an Apostle. Socrates in Plato's Euthydemus hath excellently discovered the vanity and futility of those persons under the persons of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, and so likewise in his Protagoras; their intent was only like the Retiaries in the Roman Spectacles to catch their adversaries in a net; to intangle them with some captious question or other; but how vastly different from this was the design of the Apostles who abhor'd those endless contentions which then were in the Heathen world; and came to shew them that Truth which was revealed with an intent of making them better men!*

We see the Apostles were not carried forth by any mean and vulgar motives, neither did they drive on any private ends of their own; all that they minded was the promoting of the doctrine which they preached. Nay they accounted no hazards comparable with the advantage which the world enjoyed through the propagation of the Christian Religion. This shewed a truly noble and generous spirit in them which would not be hindered from doing the world good, though they found so bad entertainment from it; yea they rejoiced in their greatest sufferings which they underwent in so good a cause; wherein

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those

Tertul. Apol.  
c. 46.

Minutius Felix.

Tertul. Ap. cap.

5.

Id. Ib.

those *Primitive Christians* who were the genuine followers of the *Apostles*, did so far imitate them, that, *etiam damnati gratias agunt*, they gave the *Judges* thanks that they thought them worthy to lose their lives in a cause which they had reason to triumph in, though they died for it. And when any of them were apprehended, they discovered so little fear of punishment, *Ut unum solummodo quod non ante fuerint pœniteret*, That nothing troubled them so much as that they had been Christians no sooner, as one of their number speaks. And when the *Heathens* usually scoffed at them and called them *Sarmentitii* and *Semaxii* because they were burned upon the Cross, one of them in the name of the rest answers, *Hic est habitus victoriæ nostræ, hæc palmata vestis, tali curru triumphamus* ; The Cross was only their triumphant Chariot, which carried them sooner to Heaven. Now this courage and resolution of spirit which was seen in the first planters of Christianity in the world, made all serious and inquisitive persons look more narrowly into those things, which made men slight so much the common bug-bears of humane nature, sufferings and death. *Quis enim non contemplatione ejus concutitur, ad requiring quid intus in re sit ? quis non ubi requisivit accedit ? ubi accessit pati exoptat ?* These sufferings made men enquire ; this enquiry made them believe ; that belief made them as willing to suffer themselves as they had seen others do it before them. Thus it appeared to be true in them, *Exquisitor quæque crudelitas, illecebra magis est sectæ ; plures efficimur quoties metimur à vobis ; semen est sanguis Christianorum* ; The cruelty of their enemies did but increase their number ; the harvest of their pretended justice was but the seed-time of Christianity, and no seed was so fruitful as that which was steeped in the blood of Martyrs. Thence *Justin Martyr* ingenuously saith of himself, That while he was a *Platonick Philosopher*, he derided and scoffed at the Christians ; but when he considered their great courage and constancy in dying for their profession, he could not think those could possibly be men wicked and voluptuous, who when offers of life were made them, would rather choose death than deny Christ. By which he found plainly that there was a higher spirit in Christianity than could be obtained by the sublime notions and speculations of Plato, and that a poor ignorant Christian would do and suffer more for the sake of Christ than any



any of the *Academy* in defence of their master *Plato*. Now since all men naturally abhor *sufferings*, what is it which should so powerfully alter the *nature* and *disposition* of *Christians* above all other persons, that they alone should seem in that to have forgot *humanity*, that not only with *patience*, but with *joy* they endured torments and abode the flames? What! were they all possessed with a far more than *Stoical* *Apothy*, that no sense of pain could work at all upon them? or were they all besotted and infatuated persons that did not know what it was they underwent? It is true some of the more blind and wilful Heathens derided them as such; but who were the more infatuated, let any sober person judge: they who slighted and rejected a doctrine of so great concernment, which came attested with so much resolution and courage in the professors of it; or they who were so far persuaded of the truth of it, that they would rather die than deny it? *Dicimus & palam dicimus, & vobis torquentibus lacerati & cruenti vociferamur, Deum colimus per Christum.* They were not ashamed to believe in the blood of *Christ* even when their own blood ran down before their eyes, and confess *Christ* with their mouths when their bodies were upon the rack. Certainly then there were some very powerfull and convincing arguments which buoyed up the spirits of true *Christians* in that deluge of sufferings which they were to swim through; it must be a strong and well-grounded faith which would hold out under so great tryals, and they could not be to seek for the most persuasive motives to faith, who were so ready to give an account to others of the hope that was in them, and to persuade all other persons to the embracing of it. With what face and confidence otherwise could they persuade men to embrace a doctrine so dangerous as that was, had there not been motives sufficient to bear up against the weight of sufferings, and arguments persuasive to convince them of the undoubted certainty of that doctrine which they encouraged them to believe?

*Tertull. Ap. cap. 21.*

Now that which appears to have been the main ground of satisfaction to the *Primitive Christians* as to the truth and certainty of the Doctrine of *Christ*, was this, That the Doctrine of the Gospel was at first delivered to the world by those persons who were themselves eye-witnesses of all the miracles which our Saviour wrought in confirmation of the truth of what he spake.

*Seet. 13.*

spake. They were such persons who had been themselves present, not only to hear most of our Saviour's admirable discourses when he was in the world, but to see all those glorious things which were done by him, to make it appear that he was immediately sent from God. Let us now appeal to our own faculties, and examine a little what rational evidence could possibly be desired, that the doctrine of the Gospel was true, which God did not afford to the world? What could the persons who were the auditors of our Saviour desire more as an evidence that he came from God, than his doing such things which were certainly above any created power, either humane or diabolical, and therefore must needs be Divine? What could other persons desire more who were not present at the doing of these miracles, but that the report of them should be conveyed to them in an undoubted manner by those persons who were eye-witnesses of them, and made it appear to the world they were far from any intention of deceiving it? Now this makes the Apostles themselves in their own writings (though they were divinely inspired) appeal to the rational evidence of the truth of the things in that they were delivered by them who were eye-witnesses of them. There St. Peter speaks thus to the dispersed Jews, & ἡ σισσομένης μύθοις ἑξακολουθήσαντες ἐγνώσαμεν ὑμῖν τὴν τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δύναμιν καὶ παρουσίαν, ἀλλ' ἐπίπλου ἡμετέρας καὶ ἐκείνη μεγαλειότης. For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his Majesty. The power and coming of Christ which the Apostle speaks of, was not as some improbably conceive, either his general coming to judgment upon the world, or his particular coming upon the Nation of the Jews; but by an Hendyades, by his power and coming is meant his powerfull appearance in the world, whereby he mightily discovered himself to be the Son of God. Now this, saith the Apostle, was no σισσομένης μύθος, not like the Heathen Mythology concerning the παρουσίας and ἐμφανείας of their Gods among them (which were so frequently believed among them, that Dionysius Halicarnassaus condemns the Epicureans, because they did deride τὰς ἐμφανείας τῶν θεῶν, the appearances of their Gods in the world) now, saith the Apostle, assure your selves, this is no such appearance of a God on Earth as that among the Heathens was; for, saith he,

we

2 Pet. i. 16.

Antiq. l. 2. pag.

128.



we our selves who declare these things were ἑπόπται, we fully understood this μίγα μυστηρίων, this great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, for we saw his μεγαλειότης, that great majesty which attended him in all which he spake or did; we saw all those μεγαλεῖα τοῦ Θεοῦ, the great things of God, which were A<sup>c</sup>t. 2. 11. manifest in him, all those miraculous operations which were wrought by him. Therefore as this was a great confirmation of the faith of the Apostles themselves that they saw all these things, so we see it was of great concernment to the world in order to their belief that the Gospel was no cunningly-devised fable, in that it was delivered by such who were ἑπόπται, eye-witnesses of what they declared. To the same purpose St. John speaks *ad conciliandam fidem*, to make it appear how true what they delivered was, in the entrance of his Epistle; That which 1 Joh. 1. 1, 2, 3. was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life, (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the father, and was manifested unto us) That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you. We see what great force and weight the Apostle lays upon this, that they delivered nothing but what they had seen and heard; as they heard the doctrine of Christ, so they saw the miracles which he wrought in confirmation of it. St. Luke likewise in the beginning of his Gospel declares that he intended to write Luk. 1. 1, 2, 3. nothing but what he had perfect understanding of from such persons who had been αὐτόπται, eye-witnesses and instruments themselves in part of what was written, for that is meant by ἐξήρταν ἡμεῖς λόγους: and those things which were written, he saith were πεπληροφρονηθεὶς ἐν ἡμῖν τεύγματα, things which are abundantly proved to be true; for being matters of fact, there could be no stronger proof of them, than by such who were eye-witnesses of what they spake. And this we find the Apostles themselves very cautious about, in the choice of a new Apostle in the room of Judas. Wherefore of these men which have companied with us, A<sup>c</sup>t. 1. 21, 22. all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken from us, must one be ordained to be a witness of his resurrection: For, because Christ was mightily declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead, (as that which

A&amp;T. 2. 32.

3. 15.

4. 20.

5. 32.

10. 39, 40, 41,

42.

was the great *Seal* of our Saviour's being the Son of God therefore we find the *Apostles* so frequently attesting the truth of the resurrection of *Christ*, and that themselves were eye-witnesses of it. Thus *Jesus*, saith *Peter*, *hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.* And again, *And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised up from the dead, whereof we are witnesses;* and both *Peter* and *John* to the Sanhedrin; *For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.* And the whole Colledge of *Apostles* afterwards, *And we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.* In which words they give them that twofold rational evidence which did manifest the undoubted truth of what they spake; for they delivered nothing but what themselves were witnesses of, and withall was declared to be true by the power of the Holy Ghost in the miracles which were wrought by and upon believers. Afterwards we read the sum of the *Apostles* Preaching, and the manner used by them to persuade men of the truth of it, in the words of *Peter* to *Cornelius* and his company, *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil, for God was with him: And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews and in Hierusalem, whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.* By all which we see what care God was pleased to take for the satisfaction of the world in point of rational evidence, as to the truth of the matters which were discovered concerning our Saviour *Christ*, because he made choice of such persons to be the preachers and writers of these things who were the best able to satisfy the world about them, viz. such as had been eye-witnesses of them.

Sect. 14.

Now in order to the making it more fully evident what strength there was in this Testimony given by the *Apostles* to the miracles of *Christ*, we shall more fully manifest the rational evidence which attended it in these following propositions.

Prop. 1.

Where the truth of a doctrine depends upon a matter of fact, the truth



*truth of the doctrine is sufficiently manifested, if the matter of fact be evidently proved in the highest way it is capable of. Thus it is in reference to the doctrine of Christ; for the truth of that is so interwoven with the truth of the story of Christ, that if the relations concerning Christ be true, his doctrine must needs be divine and infallible. For if it be undoubtedly true, that there was such a person as Christ born at Bethlehem, who did so many miracles, and at last suffered the death of the Cross; and after he had lain three days in the grave rose again from the dead, what reason imaginable can I have to question, but that the Testimony of this person was certainly Divine, and consequently what-ever he preached to the world was most certain and undoubted truth. So that if we have clear evidence as to the truth of these passages concerning our Saviour, we must likewise believe his doctrine, which came attested with such pregnant evidences of a Divine commission which he had from God to the world. No Prince can think he hath any reason to refuse audience to an Ambassador, when he finds his Credentials such as he may rely upon, although himself doth not see the sealing of them; much less reason have we to question the truth of the doctrine of the Gospel, if we have sufficient evidence of the truth of the matters of fact concerning Christ, in such a way as those things are capable of being proved.*

*The greatest evidence which can be given to a matter of fact, is the attesting of it by those persons who were eye-witnesses of it. This is the Foundation whereon the firmest assent is built, as to any matter of fact; for although we conceive we have reason to suspect the truth of a story, as long as it is conveyed only in a general way, by an uncertain fame and tradition; yet when it comes to be attested by a sufficient number of credible persons who profess themselves the eye-witnesses of it, it is accounted an unreasonable thing to distrust any longer the truth of it; especially in these two cases. 1. When the matter they bear witness to is a thing which they might easily and clearly perceive. 2. When many witnesses exactly agree in the same Testimony.*

*1. When the matter it self is of that nature that it may be fully perceived by those who saw it: i. e. if it be a common object of sense. And thus it certainly was as to the person and actions of Jesus Christ. For he was of the same nature with mankind; and they had as great evidence that they conversed with Jesus*

*Christ* in the flesh, as we can have that we converse one with another. The miracles of *Christ* were real and visible miracles; they could be no illusions of senses, nor deceits of their eyes; the man who was born blind and cured by our Saviour, was known to have been born blind through all the Country, and his cure was after as publick as his blindness before, and acknowledged by the greatest enemies of *Christ* at the time of its being done. When *Christ* raised up the dead man at Naim, it was before much people, and such persons in probability who were many of them present at his death. But lest there might be any suspicion as to him, that he was not really dead, the case is plain and beyond all dispute in *Lazarus*, who had been to the knowledge of all persons thereabouts dead four days; here could be no deceit at all when the stone was rowled away, and *Lazarus* came forth in the presence of them all. And yet further the death and passion of our Saviour was a plain object of sense done in presence of his greatest adversaries. The souldiers themselves were sufficient witnesses of his being really dead when they came to break his bones, and spared him because they saw he was dead already. At his resurrection the stone was rowled away from the Sepulchre and no body found therein, although the Sepulchre was guarded by souldiers, and the Disciples of *Christ* all so fearful, that they were dispersed up and down in several places. And that it was the same real body which he rose withall, and no aerial vehicle, appears by *Thomas* his scrupulosity and unbelief, who would not believe unless he might put his hands into the hole of his side, and see in his hands the print of the nails; now our Saviour condescending so far as to satisfy the incredulity of *Thomas*, hath made it thereby evident that the body which our Saviour rose from the grave with, was the same individual body which before was crucified and buried in the Sepulchre. And we find all the Apostles together upon our Saviour's appearance to them after his resurrection, so far from being credulous in embracing a phantasm instead of *Christ*, that they suspected that it was either a mere phantasm, or an evil spirit which appeared among them; upon which it is said, they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed they had seen a spirit. Which our Saviour could not beat them off from, but by appealing to the judgment of their senses, Handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see

Joh. 9. 26.

Luk. 7. 12.

Joh. 11. 39.

Joh. 20. 25, 27.

Luk. 24. 37.



see me have ; and afterwards more fully to convince them, he did eat in the midst of them. Now the more suspicious and incredulous the Apostles themselves at first were, the greater evidence is it how far they were from any design of abusing the world in what they after preached unto it, and what strong conviction there was in the thing it self, which was able to satisfy such scrupulous and suspicious persons.

43.

2. *When many witnesses concur in the same Testimony.* Nothing can disparage more the truth of a testimony, than the counter-witness of such who were present at the same actions ; but when all the witnesses fully agree not only in the substance, but in all material circumstances of the story, what ground or reason can there be to suspect a forgery or design in it ; especially when the persons cannot by any fears or threatnings be brought to vary from each other in it ! Thus it is in our present case, we find no real dissent at all mentioned either as to the birth, miracles, life, death, or resurrection of Jesus Christ ; all the witnesses attest the same things, though writing in different places, and upon different occasions ; no alteration in any circumstance of the story, out of any design of pleasing or gratifying any persons by it. Most of our Saviour's miracles, not only his Apostles, but the people and his very enemies were witnesses of, whose posterity to this day dare not deny the truth of such strange works which were wrought by him. And for his resurrection, it would be very strange that five hundred persons should all agree in the same thing, and that no torments or death could bring any of them to deny the truth of it, had there not been the greatest certainty in it.

*There can be no reason to suspect such a testimony which is given by eye-witnesses, but either from questioning their knowledge of the things they spake of, or their fidelity in reporting them.* Now there is not the least ground to doubt either of these, in reference to those persons who gave testimony to the world concerning the person and actions of our blessed Saviour.

Sect. 15.  
Prop. 3.

For first, They were such as were intimately conversant both with the person and actions of Jesus Christ ; whom he had chosen and trained up for that very end, that they might be sufficiently qualified to acquaint the world with the truth of things concerning himself after his resurrection from the dead. And accordingly they followed him up and down wheresoever he

went ;

went ; they were with him in his *solitudes* and *retirements*, and had thereby *occasion* to observe all his *actions*, and to take notice of the *unspotted innocency* of his *life*. Some of his *Disciples* were with him in his *transfiguration*, others in his *agony* and *bloody sweat*, they heard the *expressions* which came from his *mouth* ; in all which he discovered a *wonderfull submission* to the *will of God*, and a great *readiness of mind* to suffer for the good of the *world*. Now therefore the first thing cannot at all be questioned, *their means of knowing the truth of what they spake*.

2. Neither, *secondly*, is there any reason to suspect their *fidelity* in reporting what they knew : For, 1. *The truth of this doctrine wrought so far upon them, that they parted with all their worldly subsistence for the sake of it* : Although their *riches* were not great, yet their *way of subsistence* in the world was necessary ; they left their *houses*, their *wives* and *children*, and all for *Christ*, and that not to gain any higher *preferments* in this world (which had they done, it would have rendered their design suspicious to the curious and inquisitive world) but they let go at least a *quiet and easie life*, for one most *troublesome* and *dangerous*. So that it is not, how much they parted withall, but how *freely* they did it, and with what *cheerfulness* they underwent *disgraces*, *persecutions*, nay *death* it self for the sake of the *Gospel*. Now can it be imagined, that ever men were so prodigal of their *ease* and *lives*, as to throw both of them away upon a thing which themselves were not fully assured of the truth of ? It had been the highest folly imaginable, to have deceived themselves in a thing of so great moment to them, as the truth of the doctrine which they preached was ; because all their *hopes* and *happiness* depended upon the truth of that doctrine which they preached. And as *Tertullian* observes, *Non fas est ulli de sua religione mentiri* ; for, saith he, he that says he worships any thing besides what he doth, he denies what he doth worship, and transfers his worship upon another, and thereby doth not worship that which he thus denies ; Besides, what probability is there men should lye for the sake of that Religion which tells them that those which do so shall not receive the reward which is promised to those who cordially adhere unto it ! Nay, they declared themselves to be the most miserable of all persons if their hopes were only in this present life. Can we now think that any who had the common reason of men, would part with all the content-



contentments of this world, and expose themselves to continual hazards, and at last undergo death it self for the sake of something which was merely the fiction of their own brains? What should make them so sedulous and industrious in preaching such things that they could say necessity was laid upon them, yea, was unto them if they preached not the Gospel, when yet they saw so many woes attending them in the preaching of it, had there not been some more powerfull attractive in the beauty and excellency of the doctrine which they preached, than any could be in the ease and tranquillity of this present world? Thus we see the fidelity of the Apostles manifested in such a way as no other witnesses were ever yet willing to hazard theirs. And therefore Origen deservedly condemns Celsus of a ridiculous impertinency, when he would parallel the relations of Herodotus and Pindarus concerning Aristeus Proconnesius with those of the Apostles concerning Christ; For, saith he, did either of these two venture their lives upon the truth of what they writ concerning him, as the Apostles did to attest the truth of what they preached concerning our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

1 Cor. 9. 16.

L. 3. c. Celsus.  
p. 127.

2. The fidelity of the Apostles is evident in their manner of reporting the things which they deliver. For if ever there may be any thing gathered from the manner of expression, or the τὸ ᾧ ὁ λόγος, concerning the particular temper and disposition of the person from whom it comes, we may certainly read the greatest fidelity in the Apostles from the peculiar manner of their expressing themselves to the world. Which they do,

Señ. 16.

1. With the greatest impartiality: not declaring only what was glorious and admirable to the world, but what they knew would be accounted foolishness by it. They who had fought only to have been admired for the rare discoveries which they brought to the world, would be sure to conceal any thing which might be accounted ridiculous; but the Apostles fixed themselves most on what was most contemptible in the eyes of the world, and what they were most mocked and derided for, that they delighted most in the preaching of, which was the Cross of Christ. Paul was so much in love with this, which was a stumbling-block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks, that he valued the knowledge of nothing else in comparison of the knowledge of Christ and him crucified. Nay he elsewhere saith, God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of Christ. What now should

1 Cor. 2. 2.  
Phil. 3. 8.  
Gal. 6. 14.

should be the *reason* that they should *rejoyce* in that *most* which was *most despicable* to the *world*, had not they seen far greater *truth* and excellency in it, than in the *most sublime speculations* concerning *God* or the *souls* of *men* in the *School of Plato* or any other *Heathen Philosophers*? That all men should be *bound* in order to their *salvation*, to *believe* in one who was *crucified* at *Hierusalem*, was a *strange doctrine* to the *unbelieving world*: but if the *Apostles* had but *endeavoured* to have *suited* their *doctrine* to the *School of Plato*, what *rare persons* might they have been *accounted* among the *Heathen Philosophers*! Had they only in *general terms* discoursed of the *Benignity* of the *Divine nature*, and the *Manifestations* of *Divine goodness* in the *world*, and that, in order to the *bringing* of the *souls* of *men* to a *nearer participation* of the *Divine nature*, the *perfect Idea* of *true goodness*, and the *express image* of the *person* of *God*, and the *resplendency* of his *glory* had *veiled* himself in *Humane nature*, and had every-where scattered such *beams* of *light* and *goodness*, as *warmed* and *invigorated* the *frozen spirits* of *men* with higher *sentiments* of *God* and *themselves*, and *raised* them up above the *feculency* of this *terrestrial matter* to *breathe* in a *freer air*, and *converse* with more *noble objects*, and *by degrees* to *fit* the *souls* of *men* for those more *pure illapses* of *real goodness*, which might *always satisfy* the *soul's desires*, and yet *always keep* them up 'till the *soul* should be *sunning* it self to all *eternity* under the *immediate beams* of *Light* and *Love*: And that after this *Incarnate Deity* had *spread* abroad the *wings* of his *Love* for a *while* upon this *lower world*, 'till by his *gentle heat* and *incubation* he had *quickned* the more *pliable world* to some *degree* of a *Divine Life*, he then *retreated* himself back again into the *superiour world*, and put off that *veil* by which he made himself *known* to those who are here *confined* to the *prisons* of their *bodies*: Thus, I say, had the *Apostles* minded *applause* among the *admired Philosophers* of the *Heathens*, how *easie* had it been for them to have *made* some *considerable additions* to their *highest speculations*, and have left out any *thing* which might seem so *mean* and *contemptible* as the *death* of the *Son of God*! But this they were so far from, that the *main thing* which they *preached* to the *world*, was, the *vanity* of *humane wisdom* without *Christ*, and the *necessity* of all men's *believing* in that *Jesus* who was *crucified* at *Hierusalem*.

The



The *Apostles* indeed discover very much, infinitely more than ever the most *lofty Platonist* could do, concerning the goodness and love of God to mankind; but that wherein they manifested the love of God to the world, was, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. And that herein was the Love of God manifested, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. And that this was the greatest truth and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. They never dreamt of any Divine goodness which should make men happy without Christ: No, it was their design to persuade the world that all the communications of God's goodness to the world were wholly in and through Jesus Christ; and it is impossible that any should think otherwise, unless Plato knew more of the mind of God than our blessed Saviour, and Plotinus than Saint Paul. Can we think now that the *Apostles* should hazard the reputation of their own wits so much as they did to the world, and be accounted babblers, and fools, and mad-men, for preaching the way of salvation to be only by a person crucified between two thieves at Jerusalem, had they not been convinced not only of the truth but importance of it, and that it concerned men as much to believe it, as it did to avoid eternal misery? Did Saint Paul preach ever the less the words of truth and soberness, because he was told to his face that his Learning had made him mad? But if he was besides himself, it was for Christ; and what wonder was it if the Love of Christ in the *Apostle* should make him willing to lose his reputation for him, seeing Christ made himself of no reputation, that he might be in a capacity to do us good? We see the *Apostles* were not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, because they knew it was the power of God to salvation, and therefore neither in their preaching or their writings would they omit any of those passages concerning our Saviour's death, which might be accounted the most dishonourable to his person. Which is certainly as great an evidence of their fidelity as can be expected; which makes Origen say that the Disciples of Christ writ all things φιλαλήτως καὶ εὐγνωμόνως, with a great deal of candor and love of truth. ἐκ δὲ πολλῶν τῶν περὶ αὐτοῦ ᾧδεθεῖς ἱστορίας τὸ δουρῆν πῶς πολλοῖς ἀποκρύπτειν τὸν λόγον τοῦ χριστιανισμοῦ, not concealing from the world those passages of the life of Christ, which would be accounted most foolish and ridiculous.

2. *With the greatest plainness and simplicity of speech.* Such whose design is to impose upon the minds of men with some cunningly-devised fables, love as much ambiguity as ever Apollo did in his most winding Oracles, of whom it is said,

*Ambage nexa Delphico mos est Deo  
Arcana tegere.*

In 4. *Æneid.*

*Servius* tells us, that *Jupiter Ammon* was therefore pictured with *Rams-horns*, because his answers had as many turnings and windings as they had. But the horns which *Moses* was wont to be pictured with, did only note light and perspicuity (from the ambiguity of קרן, which notes the sending forth of rays of light like a horn,) and yet *Moses* himself was veiled in comparison of the openness and plainness of speech which was in the *Apostles*. *Impostors* cast a mist of many dark and cloudy words before them, but when they are once brought into the open light, their vizard falls off, and their deformity appears. Such persons delight in soaring quite out of the apprehensions of those who follow them, and never think themselves better recompensed for their pains, than when they are most admired and least understood. But never was *Christianity* more dishonoured, than when men brought it from its native simplicity and plainness, into a company of cloudy and insignificant expressions, which are so far from making men better understand the truth of it, that it was certainly the Devil's design by such obscure terms to make way for a mystery to be advanced, (but it was of iniquity,) and soon after, we see the effect of it in another Oracle set up at *Rome* instead of *Delphos*; and all the pretence of it, was the obscurity supposed in *Scripture*. What! darkness come by the rising of the Sun! Or is the Sun at last grown so beggarly, that he is fain to borrow light of the Earth? Must the *Scripture* be beholding to the Church for its clearness, and *Christ* himself not speak intelligibly, unless the Pope be his Interpreter? Did *Christ* reveal to the world the way to salvation, and yet leave men to seek which was it, 'till a Guide never heard of in the *Scripture* come to direct them in the way to it? What strange witnesses were the *Apostles*, if they did not speak the truth with plainness? How had men been to seek as to the truth of *Christianity*, if the *Apostles* had not declared



declared the doctrine of the Gospel with all evidence and perspicuity? Whom must we believe in this case, the Apostles or the Roman Oracle? The Apostles they tell us they speak with all plainness of speech, and for that end purposely lay aside all excellency of words and humane wisdom, that men might not be to seek for their meaning in a matter of so great moment; that the Gospel was hid to none but such as are lost, and whose eyes are blinded by the God of this world; that the doctrine revealed by them is a light to direct us in our way to Heaven, and a rule to walk by; and it is a strange property of light to be obscure, and of a rule to be crooked. But it is not only evident from the Apostles own affirmations, that they laid aside all affected obscurity, ambiguous expressions, and Philosophical terms, whereby the world might have been to seek for what they were to believe, but it is likewise clear from the very nature of the doctrine they preached, and the design of their preaching of it. What need Rhetorick in plain truths? or affected phrases in giving evidence? How incongruous would obscure expressions have been to the design of saving souls by the foolishness of preaching? For if they had industriously spoken in their preaching, above the capacities of those they spake to, they could never have converted a soul without a miracle; for the ordinary way of conversion must be by the understanding; and how could that work upon the understanding, which was so much above it? But, saith the Apostle, we preach not our selves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and our selves your servants for Jesus sake. If they had sought themselves or their own credit and reputation, there might have been some reason that they should have used the way of the Sophists among the Greeks, and by declamatory speeches to have inanced their esteem among the vulgar. But the Apostles disowned and rejected all these vulgar artifices of mean and low-spirited men; they laid aside all those enticing words *ἀπαγωγὰς σοφίας* of the way of the Heathen Sophists, and declared the Testimony of God with spiritual evidence; they handled not the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commended themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God: Now what could be so suitable to such a design, as the greatest plainness and faithfulness in what they spake? We find in the testimony of the Apostles, *ἐδὲν νότον καὶ κυβερνητικὸν καὶ πηλασμοῦ καὶ παύσεον*, as Origen speaks, Nothing that is spurious or counterfeit, p. 135.

2 Cor. 3. 12.

1 Cor. 2. 1, 4.

1 Cor. 4. 3, 4.

2 Cor. 4. 5.

1 Cor. 2. 4.

2 Cor. 4. 2.

Orig. c. Cels. 3.

feit, nothing savouring of the cunning craftiness of such as lie in wait to deceive; and, saith he, it is impossible to think that men never bred up in the Sophistry of the Greeks, nor experienced in the Rhetorical insinuations used among them, could ever be able so suddenly to persuade the world to embrace that which had been a figment of their own brains. The truth is, the Apostles speak like men very confident of the truth of what they speak, and not like such who were fain to fetch in the help of all their Topicks, to find out some probable arguments to make men believe that which it is probable they did not believe themselves, which was most commonly the case of the great Orators among the Heathens. We find no pedantick flourishes, no flattering insinuations, no affected cadencies, no such great care of the rising and falling of words in the several sentences, which make up so great a part of that which was accounted eloquence in the Apostles times. These things were too mean a prey for the spirits of the Apostles to quarry upon; every thing in them was grave and serious, every word had its due weight, every sentence brimfull of spiritual matter, their whole discourse most becoming the Majesty and Authority of that spirit which they spake by. And therein was seen a great part of the infinite wisdom of God in the choice he made of the persons who were to propagate the Doctrine of Christ in the world, that they were not such who by reason of their great repute and fame in the world, might easily draw whole multitudes to embrace their dictates, but (that there might not be the least foundation for an implicate faith) they were of so mean rank and condition in the world, that in all probability their names had never been heard of, had not their doctrine made them famous. To this purpose Origen excellently speaks, οἶμαι ὅτι καὶ τὸ Ἰησοῦν διὰ τοῦτο βεβελῆναι διδασκάλους τῶ ἁγίου-  
 ΓΩ χρησθῆναι ταῖς τοῖς, ἵνα μηδεμίαν αὐτῷ ἔχη χάριν ὑπόνοια πιδανῶν  
 σοφισμάτων λαμπρῶς ὅτι τοῖς συνίεναι δυνατοῖς ἐμπαῖνῃσαι, ὅτι τὸ ἀ-  
 δελον τὸ περὶ αἰρέσεως, ὅτι γεγενῆσθαι, ἐχέουσιν πολὺ τὸ ἀφελές, ἢ ξιῶν  
 διανοήσεως δυνάμειος, πολλῶν μᾶλλον ἀνυῖσης, ἢ περ ἀνύειν δύνασθαι δοκεῖ  
 φεισολὸν λόγων, καὶ λέξεων σύνδεσις, καὶ μετὰ διαίρεσθαι καὶ περὶ λογίας  
 Ἑλληνικῆς ἀκολογία. I am of opinion, saith he, that Jesus did  
 purposely make use of such Preachers of his Doctrine, that there  
 might be no place for suspicion that they came instructed with the  
 arts of Sophistry; but that it be clearly manifest to all that would  
 consider it, that there was nothing of design in those who disco-  
 vered



vered so much simplicity in their writings, and that they had a more divine power which was more efficacious than the greatest volubility of expressions, or ornaments of speech, or the artifices which were used in the Grecian compositions.

3. The Apostles delivered their doctrine with the greatest openness and freedom of spirit; they did not give out one thing to the world, and another to their private Disciples; but with great freedom and boldness declared their doctrine in the most publick places, and before their greatest enemies. They knew they were looked on as deceivers by the world, but yet they knew themselves to be true, *ὡς πλάνοι καὶ ἀληθεῖς*. This is the usual requital good men have from the world, that they are looked on as the greatest deceivers of it; if it be so with others, they have much less cause to wonder at it, when even he, who by one Prophet is styled the desire of Nations, is by another said to be despised and rejected of men; and when Christ was in the world, he was called *ὁ πλάνος*, the deceiver; no wonder then if his Disciples were accounted such, although they manifested their veracity by their open carriage and free speaking to the faces of their greatest adversaries. The Apostles neither feared the Jews skill in their Law, nor the wisdom and subtilty of the Greeks: Saint Paul preacheth Christ openly among the Jews in their Synagogues, and among the Athenians he encounters the Epicureans and Stoicks, and preacheth to them Jesus and the resurrection. If the Apostles had any thing of deceivers in them, as to the things they related concerning Christ, they would not certainly have spoken with so much confidence concerning Christ in the presence of those who had been his murtherers; but we see they appealed to themselves, as to the miracles which he had wrought among them, and for his resurrection they were ready to lay down their lives in giving testimony to the truth of it. That his body was gone, was evident; that the Apostles should take it away was impossible, considering what a guard of souldiers they had set upon it, and how timorous and fearfull the Apostles were, that they fled upon Christ's being apprehended. Now what could it be, could make such fearfull persons afterwards so courageous and resolute as they were, had there not been some more than ordinary power to convince and encourage them?

2 Cor. 6. 8.

Hag. 2. 7.

Isa. 53. 3.

Mat. 27. 63.

Act. 17. 18.

4. The *Apostles* deliver their *Testimony* with the greatest particularity as to all circumstances. They do not change or alter any of them upon different examinations before several persons ; they all agree in the greatest constancy to themselves and uniformity with each other. As to matters of indifferency, we find the *Apostles* very yielding and condescending ; but as to any thing which concerned their testimony, most constant and resolved. Had the Gospel been some cunningly-contrived fancy, it had been impossible but so many different persons, in such different places, and under such different conditions, would have varied as to some material circumstance of it : Or else they would have been so wise as to have delivered it in general terms, without insisting much on such particular circumstances, which if they had been false, might have been very easily disproved ; but with what particular enumeration of circumstances do the *Apostles* preach *Christ* to the world ? *Peter* tells the *Jews* that it was *Jesus of Nazareth* whom he preached ; and lest they should think it was not the same person who rose again ; with great boldness and freedom of spirit he saith to them, *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.* Yea that same individual person who was conversant in the world, and died upon the Cross, is now become a Prince and Saviour to give repentance to *Israel* and remission of sins. If there had been any ground of suspicion as to these things, who had been so able to disprove them, or so ready to do it, as those persons who had crucified him ? For we cannot conceive but those who had a hand in his death, would endeavour by all possible means to disprove his resurrection from the dead. For what a case were they like to be in, if those things which the *Apostles* so confidently preached were true ? If *Christ* had all power now in his hands, and there were salvation in no other name, but only in his whom they had crucified, they were like to be in a most desperate condition ; therefore if any men can be supposed inquisitive after the truth of these circumstances, no doubt these were : And if they could have found the least flaw in their testimony, the world would soon have ringed of it ; and the *Jews* who were then so much dispersed abroad, would have divulged it into all parts, the *Apostles* would have been told of it as they preached *Christ* in the *Synagogues*. And can we in any reason think, but those

*Jews*

Act. 2. 22.

2. 36.

5. 31, 32.



*Jews* who persecuted *Paul* as he preached in the *Synagogues* of *Asia*, and afterwards impeached him so openly at *Jerusalem*, would there enquire into all the circumstances concerning *Christ*; and all the other *Jews* would write to their friends at *Jerusalem* to be fully informed of those strange things which were told them openly in all places in their *Synagogues* by men of their own Nation and Language, concerning one *Jesus* who was crucified and rose again from the dead. Had there been now any so much as plausible pretext that any of these circumstances were not true, can we think but that a people so unmeasurably given to their own ways and traditions, would in all places have vented any thing that might have tended to the disparagement of *Christ* and his *Apostles*? But we see malice it self could not find any flaw in the *Apostles* testimony; for if it had, we should certainly have heard of it, either from the *Jews*, or from the great opposers of *Christianity* among the *Heathens*, who pretended to be curious and inquisitive persons, such as *Celsus*, *Julian*, *Hierocles* and *Porphyrie* were. What reason can we have then in the least to suspect such a Testimony which passed so uncontrouled in that time when it was alone capable of being disproved, and men's interest and design would put them so much upon it? The strength of which will appear from the next proposition, which is,

*No Testimony ought to be taken against a matter of fact thus attested, but from such persons who had greater knowledge of the things attested, and manifest greater fidelity in reporting them. It is easie to make it appear, that supposing any persons at that time had contradicted the Testimony of the Apostles concerning our Saviour, yet there had been no reason in the world to have hearkned to their Testimony in opposition to that of the Apostles; and that on these accounts.* 1. *The Apostles* witnessed the Affirmative, which is more capable of being attested than any Negative can be. 2. *The Apostles* were more conversant with *Christ* than any other persons were, because they were chosen for that very end by him to be constantly with him: could any therefore be more capable of knowing the truth of all particulars concerning *Christ* than these were? Had there been any ground of suspicion concerning the design of *Christ*, why could not the *Jews* prevail with *Judas* to discover it as well as to betray his person? *Judas* had done but a good work if *Christ* had been such

Sect. 17.  
Prop. 4.

Mat. 27. 5.

such an *impostor* as the *Jews* blasphemously said he was: what made *Judas* then so little satisfied with his work, that he grew weary of his life upon it, and threw himself away in the most horrid despair? No person certainly had been so fit to have been produced as a witness against *Christ*, as *Judas* who had been so long with him, and had heard his speeches and observed his miracles; but he had not patience enough to stay after that horrid fact to be a witness against him: nay he was the greatest witness at that time for him, when he who had betrayed him came to the *Sanhedrin* when consulting about his death, and told them that he had sinned in betraying innocent blood. What possible evidence could have been given more in behalf of our Saviour than that was? When a person so covetous as to betray his Master for thirty pieces of silver, was so weary of his bargain that he comes and throws back the money, and declares the person innocent whom he had betrayed? And this person too was such a one as knew our Saviour far better than any of the witnesses whom afterwards they suborned against him, who yet contradicted each other; and at last could produce nothing which in the judgment of the *Heathen Governour* could make him judge *Christ* worthy of death. 3. The *Apostles* were freer from design than any counter-witness at that time could be; we have already proved the *Apostles* could not possibly have any other motive to affirm what they did, but full conviction of the truth of what they spake; but now if any among the *Jews* at that time had asserted any thing contrary to the *Apostles*, we have a clear account of it, and what motive might induce them to it; viz. the preserving of their honour and reputation with the people, the upholding their traditions, besides their open and declared enmity against *Christ* without any sufficient reason at all for it; now who would believe the Testimony of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* who had so great authority among the people, which they were like to lose, if *Christ's doctrine* were true, before that of the *Apostles* who parted with all for the sake of *Christ*, and ventured themselves wholly upon the truth of our Saviour's doctrine? 4. None ever did so much to attest the Negative, as the *Apostles* did to prove their fidelity as to the Affirmative. Had sufficient counter-witness been timely produced, we cannot think the *Apostles* would have run so many continual hazards in Preaching the things which related to the per-  
son



son and actions of Christ. Did ever any lay down their lives to undeceive the world if the Apostles were guilty of abusing it? 5. The number of such persons had been inconsiderable in comparison of those who were so fully persuaded of the truth of those things which concern our Saviour; who were all ready (as most of them did) to seal the truth of them with their lives. Whence should so many men grow so suddenly confident of the truth of such things which were contrary to their former persuasions, interest, education, had they not been delivered in such a way, that they were assured of the undoubted truth of them? which brings me to the last proposition, which is,

*Matters of fact being first believed on the account of eye-witnesses, and received with an universal and uncontrouled assent by all such persons who have thought themselves concerned in knowing the truth of them, do yield a sufficient foundation for a firm assent to be built upon.* I take it for granted that there is sufficient foundation for a firm assent, where there can be no reason given to question the evidence; which that there is not in this present case, will appear from these following considerations.

1. *That the multitudes of those persons who did believe these things, had liberty and opportunity to be satisfied of the truth of them before they believed them.* Therefore no reason or motive can be assigned, on which they should be induced to believe these things, but the undoubted evidence of truth which went along with them. I confess in Mahometism a very great number of persons have for some centuries of years continued in the belief of the doctrine of Mahomet; but then withall there is a sufficient account to be given of that, viz. the power of the sword which keeps them in awe, and strictly forbids all the followers of Mahomet to dispute their religion at all, or compare it with any other. Therefore I can no more wonder at this, than I do to see so great a part of the world under the Tyranny of the great Turk: Neither on the other side do I wonder that such a multitude of those professing Christianity should together with it, believe a great number of erroneous doctrines, and live in the practice of many gross superstitions, because I consider what a strange prevalency education hath upon softer spirits and more easie intellectuals, and what an awe an Inquisition bears upon timorous and irresolved persons. But now when a great multitude of persons sober and inquisitive, shall contrary to the prin-

Sect. 18.

Prop. 5.

ciples of their education, and without fear of any humane force, (which they before-hand see will persecute them) and after diligent enquiry made into the grounds on which they believe, forsake all their former persuasions, and resolutely adhere to the truth of the doctrine propounded to them, though it cost them their lives; if this give us not reason to think this doctrine true, we must believe mankind to be the most unhappy creatures in the world; that will with so much resolution part with all advantages of this life for the sake of one to come, if that be not undoubtedly certain, and the doctrine proposing it infallibly true. It is an observable circumstance in the propagation of Christian Religion, that though God made choice at first of persons generally of mean rank and condition in the world to be Preachers of the Gospel, God thereby making it appear that our faith did not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, and therefore chose the weak things of the world to confound the strong; yet soon after the Gospel was preached abroad in the world, we find persons of great place and reputation, of great parts and abilities engaged in the profession of the Christian Faith. In the History of the Acts we read of Sergius a Pro-consul, of Dionysius the Areopagite converted to the faith, and in the following ages of the Church many persons of great esteem for their excellent learning and abilities; such was Justin Martyr, one who before he became a Christian, was conversant with all Sects of Philosophers, Stoicks, Peripateticks, Pythagoreans, and at last was a professed Platonist till he was converted from Plato to Christ, and then found that true which he speaks of in his Dialogue with Trypho, that after all his enquiries into Philosophy, speaking of the Doctrine of Christ ταύτην μόνον εὐερισκον φιλοσοφίαν ἀσφαλῆ τε καὶ σύμφερον, I found this at last to be the only sure and profitable Philosophy. And when Trypho after derides him as a man of very easie faith, who would leave the doctrine of Plato for that of Christ, (for it seems by him the Jews then had a more favourable opinion of the state of Platonists than Christians) Justin is so far from being moved with such reproaches, that he tells him he would undertake to demonstrate to him, ὅτι ἐκ νεοῖς ἐπιστάμεθα μύθους, ἐξ ἀναποδείκτοις λόγους, ἀλλὰ μετὰ πνεύματος θεοῦ καὶ δυναμει βεβύκει, καὶ τετιηλόσι χάριτι: that the Christians did not give credit to empty fables, and unprovable assertions, but to such a doctrine as was full of a Divine spirit and power, and flourished

1. Cor. 2. 5.  
1. Cor. 1. 27.

Dialog. cum  
Trypho. p. 125.  
ad. Par.



flourished with grace : The proving of which is the subject of that discourse. At Alexandria we meet with a succession of excellent persons, all which were not only embracers themselves, but defenders of the Christian faith ; for setting aside there *A-bilius, Justus, Cerdo, Eumenes, Marcus, Celadion, Agrippinus, Julianus, Demetrius*, and others who flourished about the second Century, I shall only fix on those persons, who were famous enquirers after truth, and noted for excellency in Heathen learning ; yet these persons after all their enquiries found nothing to fix on but the Christian faith, and valued no other discovery of truth in comparison with that. Such was *Pantæus*, who as *Eusebius* tells us, was an excellent Stoick before he became a Christian, and was after so eminent a one, that in imitation of the Apostles he went into India to convert the inhabitants to the Christian faith, and at his return was made Rector of the School at Alexandria ; which as the same Author tells us, was much frequented by such who were ἐν λόγῳ καὶ τῇ περὶ τὰ θεῖα Γραμμάτων ἀριστεροί, well skill'd in Humane as well as Divine learning. How excellent *Pantæus* was in Humane learning, may appear in that *Origen* and *Hierome* both make his example their plea for the studying of it. After him succeeded *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Pantæus* his Scholar, a person of great depth of learning and exquisitely skill'd in all Heathen Antiquities, as appears by his remaining writings. The Learning of *Origen* is sufficiently known, which was in such great reputation in his own time, that not only Christians but Philosophers flocked to his Lectures at Alexandria as *Eusebius* tells us, wherein he read the Mathematicks, and other parts of Philosophy as well as the Scriptures ; and the same Author informs us that the Philosophers did dedicate their books to him, and sometimes chose him as arbitrator between them in matters of dispute ; and *Porphyrie* himself in his books against the Christians vouchsafed a high encomium of *Origen* for his excellent learning. In *Origen's* time *Heraclas* a Presbyter of Alexandria for five years together frequented the Schools of the Philosophers, and put on the Philosophick pallium, βιβλία τε ἑλλήνων καὶ καὶ δυναμὴν ἐπαύσαι φιλοσόφων, and was very conversant in the books of the Grecian Learning. Besides these we read of *Pierius* and *Achillas* two Presbyters of Alexandria who were τῇ καὶ ἑλλήνων παιδείᾳ καὶ φιλοσοφίᾳ ἀδούματοι, as *Nicephorus Calistus* speaks, persons well skilled in

*Hist. Eccl. l. 5. c. 10.*

*Euseb. l. 6. c. 20.*

*Hist. l. 6. c. 18.*

*Euseb. l. 6. c. 20.*

*Hist. Eccles. l. 6. c. 35.*

the Grecian Learning and Philosophy. If from Alexandria we go to Casarea, there we not only meet with a School of learning among the Christians, but with persons very eminent in all kinds of learning ; such were the famous Pamphilus and Eusebius so great an admirer of him, that ever since he is called Eusebius Pamphili. At Antioch was Dorotheus ἀνὴς παντῶν λόγων καὶ παιδείας ἐλευθερὸς, as Nicephorus speaks, a person versed in all kind of ingenuous literature. Anatolius Bishop of Laodicea, one versed in Geometry, Astronomy, and all kind of Philosophy as well as in the doctrine of Christ. Thus we see how in those early days of the Greek Church what excellent persons many of those were who were zealous Professors of Christianity; and concerning those of the Latin Church, I shall only mention that speech of St. Austin who was himself an instance of the same nature and a star of the first magnitude among them. Nonne aspiciamus quanto auro & argento & veste suffarcinatus exierit de Aegypto Cyprianus Doctor suavissimus & Martyr beatissimus ? quanto Lactantius ? quanto Victorinus, Optatus, Hilarius ? ut de vivis taceam : quanto innumerabiles Græci ? quod prior ipse fidelissimus Dei servus Moses fecerat, de quo scriptum est, quod eruditus fuerit omni sapientia Egyptiorum. To whose catalogue of learned persons, among the Latin Christians Tertullian, Arnobius and several others may be deservedly added. But as St. Austin there well observes, though the Israelites went rich out of Aegypt, yet it was their eating the Passover which saved them from destruction ; so though these were accomplished with those perfections and riches of the soul, the ornaments of learning, yet it was their eating the true Passover which was Christ, by their adhering to his doctrine, was that which would be of more advantage to them, than all their accomplishments would be. Now then since in the first ages of the Christian Church, we find not only innumerable multitudes of persons of great integrity and sobriety in their lives embracing the doctrine of Christ, but so many persons that were curious enquirers after the truth of things, we can certainly have no reason to distrust such a Testimony which was received in so unanimous a manner by persons as able to judge of the truth of things, and as fearful of being deceived in reference to them as any now in the world can be.



2. As this *Testimony* was received by persons *inquisitive* after the truth of things, so the doctrine conveyed by it was a matter of the highest moment in the world: and therefore we cannot conceive but persons ordinarily *inquisitive* about other things would be more than ordinarily so about this, because their eternal welfare and happiness did depend upon it. All persons that are truly religious, must at least be allowed to be persons very *inquisitive* after the state and condition of their souls when they shall be dislodged from their bodies. And if we do but grant this, can we in any reason think that such a multitude of persons in so many ages should continue venturing their souls upon a *Testimony* which they had no assurance of the truth of? And that none of all these persons, though men otherwise rational and judicious, should be able to discover the falsity of that doctrine they went upon, if at least any upon consideration of it can imagine it to be so? It is not reconcilable with the general presumption of Humane nature concerning Divine providence and the care God takes of the welfare of men, to suffer so many persons who sincerely desire to serve God in the way which is most pleasing to him, to go on in such a continual delusion, and never have it at all discovered to them. If all then who have believed the doctrine of Christ to be the only way to salvation have been deceived, either we must deny altogether a Divine Providence, or say the Devil hath more power to deceive men than God to direct them, which is worse than the former; or else assert that there are no such things at all as either God or Devils, but that all things come to pass by chance and fortune; and if so, it is still more inexplicable why such multitudes of rational and serious men, and the most inquisitive part of the world as to such things should all be so possessed with the truth and certainty of these things: and the more profane, wicked and ignorant any persons are, the more prone they are to mock and deride them. If such men then see more into truth and reason than the sober and judicious part of mankind, let us bid adieu to humanity and adore the brutes, since we admire their judgment most who come the nearest to them.

3. The multitude of these persons thus consenting in this *Testimony*, could have no other engagements to this consent, but only their firm persuasion of the truth of the doctrine conveyed by it; because those who unanimously agree in this thing are such persons

sons whose other designs and interests in this world, differ as much as any men's do. If it had been only a consent of Jews, there might have been some probable pretence to have suspected a matter of interest in it; but as to this thing, we find the Jews divided among themselves about it; and the stiffest deniers of the truth of it, do yet inviolably preserve those sacred records among them, from which the truth of the doctrine of Christ may be undoubtedly proved. Had the Christian Religion been enforced upon the world by the Roman Emperors at the time of its first promulgation, there would have been some suspicion of particular design in it; but it came with no other strength but the evidence of its own truth; yet it found suddain and strange entertainment among persons of all nations and degrees of men. In a short time it had eaten into the heart of the Roman Empire, and made so large a spread therein, that it made Ter-  
*Apolog. cap. 36.* tullian say; *Hesterni sumus, & vestra omnia implevimus, urbes, insulas, castella, municipia, conciliabula, castra ipsa, tribus, decurias, palatium, senatum, forum; sola vobis relinquimus Tempia. Ue* have but newly appeared, saith he, and yet we have filled all places with our company, but only your Temples; and before speaking of the Heathens, *Obsessam vociferantur civitatem, in agris, in Castellis, in insulis Christianos, omnem sexum, aetatem, conditionem, etiam dignitatem transgredi ad hoc nomen quasi detrimento mærent.* All sorts and conditions of men in all places, were suddenly become Christians. What common tye could there be now to unite all these persons together, if we set aside the undoubted truth and certainty of the doctrine of Christ which was first preached to them by such who were eye-witnesses of Christ's actions, and had left sacred records behind them, containing the substance of the doctrine of Christ and those admirable instructions which were their only certain guides in the way to Heaven?

*Apol. c. 1.*

4. Because many persons do-joyn in this consent with true Christians, who yet could heartily wish that the doctrine of Christianity were not true. Such are all those persons who are sensual in their lives, and walk not according to the rules of the Gospel, yet dare not question or deny the truth of it. Such who could heartily wish there were no future state, nor judgment to come, that they might indulge themselves in this world without fear of another; yet their consciences are so far convinced of, and  
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awed by the *truth* of these *things*, that they raise many *perplexities* and *anxieties* in their *minds* which they would most willingly be rid of; which they can never *thoroughly* be, till instead of *having* the *name* of *Christians*, they come to *live* the *life* of *Christians*, and become *experimentally* acquainted with the *truth* and *power* of *Religion*. And withall we find that the more men have been *acquainted* with the *practice* of *Christianity*, the greater *evidence* they have had of the *truth* of it, and been more *fully* and *rationally* persuaded of it. To such I grant there are such *powerfull* *evidences* of the *truth* of the *doctrine* of *Christ* by the *effectual* *workings* of the *Spirit* of *God* upon their *souls*, that all other *arguments*, as to their own *satisfaction*, may fall *short* of these. As to which, those *verses* of the *Poet* *Dantes*, rendred into *Latin* by *F. S.* are very *pertinent* and *significant*; for when he had *introduced* the *Apostle* *Perer*, asking him what it was which his *faith* was *founded* on, he answers,

*Deinde exivit ex luce profunda*  
*Quæ illic splendebat pretiosa gemma*  
*Super quam omnis virtus fundatur.*

i. e. That God was pleased by immediate revelation of himself, to discover that divine truth to the world whereon our faith doth stand as on its sure foundation; but when the *Apostle* goes on to enquire how he knew this came at first from God, his answer to that is,

——— *larga pluvia*  
*Spiritus Sancti, quæ est diffusa*  
*Super veteres & super novas membranas,*  
*Est syllogismus ille qui eam mihi conclusit.*  
*Adeo acutè, ut præ illa demonstratione*  
*Omnis demonstratio alia mihi videatur obtusa.*

i. e. That the Spirit of God doth so fully discover it self both in the Old and New Testament, that all other arguments are but dull and heavy if compared with this. It is true they are so to a truly inlightned conscience which discovers so much beauty and glory in the Scriptures, that they ravish the soul, although it be  
unable

unable to give so full an account of this unto others who want the eyes to see that beauty with, which a heart truly gracious hath. We see ordinarily in the world, that the attraction of beauty is an unaccountable thing; and one may discern that which ravisheth him, which another looks on as mean and ordinary; and why may it not be much more thus in divine objects which want spiritual eyes to discover them? Therefore I grant that good men enjoy that satisfaction to their own Consciences, as to the truth of the Doctrine of Christ, which others cannot attain to; but yet I say, that such do likewise see the most strong, rational and convincing evidence which doth induce them to believe; which evidence is then most convincing, when it is seconded by the peculiar energy of the Spirit of God upon the souls of true Believers. But yet we see that the power and force of the truth of these things may be so great, even upon such minds which are not yet moulded into the fashion of true goodness, that it may awe with its light and clearness, where it doth not soften and alter by its heat and influence. Now whence can it be that such convictions should stick so fast in the minds of those who would fain pull out those piercing arrows, but that there is a greater power in them than they are masters of, and they cannot stand against the force whereby they come upon them; nor find any salve to cure the wounds which are made within them, but by those weapons which were the causes of them? And therefore when wicked persons under conflicts of conscience, cannot ease themselves by direct Atheism, or finding reason to cast off such convictions by discerning any invalidity in the Testimony whereon the truth of these things depends, it is a certain argument that there is abundant truth in that Testimony, when men would fain persuade themselves to believe the contrary, and yet cannot.

5. The truth of this consent appears, from the unanimity of it among those persons who have yet strangely differed from each other in many controversies in Religion. We see thereby this unanimity is no forced or designed thing, because we see the persons agreeing in this, do very much disagree from each other in other things. And the same grounds and reasons whereon they disagree as to other things, would have held as to these too, were there not greater evidence of the certainty of these things than of those they fall out about. It hath not yet become a question



*question among those who differ so much about the sense of Scripture, whether the Scripture its self be the Word of God, although the very accounts on which we are to believe it to be so, hath been the subject of no mean Controversies. All the divided parts of the Christian world do yet fully agree in the matters of fact, viz. that there was such a person as Jesus Christ, and that he did many great miracles, that he died on the Cross at Jerusalem, and rose again from the dead; now these contain the great foundations of Christian faith, and therefore the multitude of other controversies in the world ought to be so far from weakning our faith, as to the truth of the doctrine of Christ (which men of weak judgments and Atheistical spirits pretend) that it ought to be a strong confirmation of it, when we see persons which so peevishly quarrel with each other about some inferiour and less weighty parts of Religion, do yet unanimously consent in the principal foundations of Christian faith, and such whereon the necessity of faith and obedience, as the way to salvation, doth more immediately depend. And this may be one great reason why the infinitely wise God may suffer such lamentable contentions and divisions to be in the Christian world, that thereby inquisitive persons may see that if Religion had been a mere design of some few politick persons, the quarrelsome world (where it is not held in by force) would never have consented so long in the owning such common principles which all the other Controversies are built upon. And although it be continually seen that in divided parties, one is apt to run from any thing which is received by the other, and men generally think they can never run far enough from them whose errors they have discovered, that yet this principle hath not carried any considerable party of the Christian world (out of their indignation against those great corruptions which have crept into the world under a pretence of Religion) to the disowning the foundation of Christian faith, must be partly imputed to the signal hand of Divine providence, and partly to those strong evidences which there are of the truth of that Testimony which conveys to us the foundations of Christian faith. Thus we see now, how great and uncontrouled this consent is, as to the matters of fact deliverred down from the eye-witnesses of them, concerning the actions and miracles of our blessed Saviour, (which are contained in the Scriptures as authentical records of*

them,) and what a sure *foundation* there is for a *firm assent* to the *truth* of the *things* from so *universal* and *uninterrupted* a *tradition*.

*Seet.* 20.

Thus far we have now manifested the *necessity* of the *miracles* of *Christ*, in order to the *propagation* of *Christianity* in the world, from the consideration of the *persons* who were to *propagate* it in the world; the *next thing* we are to consider, is, the *admirable success* which the *Gospel* met with in the world upon its being preached to it: Of which no rational account can be given, unless the *actions* and *miracles* of our *Saviour* were most undoubtedly *true*. That the *Gospel* of *Christ* had very strange and wonderfull *success* upon its first preaching, hath been partly discovered already, and is withall so plain from the long *continuance* of it in these *European* parts, that none any ways conversant in the history of former ages, can have any ground to question it. But that this *strange* and *admirable success* of the *doctrine* of *Christ* should be an evidence of the *Truth* of it, and the *miracles* wrought in confirmation of it, will appear from these two considerations. 1. *That the doctrine its self was so directly contrary to the general inclinations of the world.* 2. *That the propagation of it was so much opposed by all worldly power.*

1. *That the doctrine its self was so opposite to the general inclinations of the world.* The *doctrine* may be considered either as to its *credenda*, or *matters of faith*, or as to its *agenda*, or *matters of life and practice*; both these were contrary to the *inclinations* of the world; the former seemed *hard* and *incredible*, the latter *harsh* and *impossible*.

1. The *matters of faith* which were to be believed by the world, were not such *things* which we may imagine the vulgar sort of men would be very forward to run after, nor very greedy to imbrace. 1. *Because contrary to the principles of their education, and the Religion they were brought up in;* the generality of mankind is very *tenacious* of those *principles* and *prejudices* which are sucked in in the time of *Infancy*. There are some *Religions* one would think it were *impossible* that any *rational* men should believe them; but only on this *account*, because they are bred up under them. It is a very great *advantage* any *Religion* hath against another, that it comes to speak *first*, and thereby *insinuates* such an *apprehension* of its self to the



the mind, that it is very hard removing it afterwards. The understanding seems to be of the nature of those things which are *communis juris*, and therefore *primi sunt possidentis*; when an opinion hath once got possession of the mind, it usually keeps out what-ever comes to disturb it. Now we cannot otherwise conceive but all those persons who had been bred up under Paganism and the most gross Idolatry, must needs have a very potent prejudice against such a doctrine which was wholly irreconcilable with that Religion which they had been devoted to. Now the stronger the prejudice is which is conveyed into men's minds by the force of education, the greater strength and power must there needs be in the Gospel of Christ, which did so easily demolish these strong holds, and captivate the understandings of men to the obedience of Christ. To which purpose Arnobius excellently speaks in these words to the Heathens; *Sed non creditis gesta hæc. Sed qui ea conspicati sunt fieri & sub oculis suis viderunt agi, testes optimi certissimique auctores, & crediderunt hæc ipsi, & credenda posteris nobis haud exilibus cum approbationibus tradiderunt. Quinam isti fortasse quaeritis? gentes, populi, nationes & incredulum illud genus humanum. Quod nisi aperta res esset, & luce ipsa quemadmodum dicitur clarior, nunquam rebus hujusmodi credulitatis suæ commodarent assensum. An nunquid dicemus illius temporis homines usque adeo fuisse vanos, mendaces, stolidos, brutos, ut quæ nunquam viderant vidisse se fingerent? & quæ facta omnino non erant falsis proderent testimoniis aut puerili assertionem firmarent? Cumque possent vobiscum & unanimiter vivere, & inoffensas ducere conjunctiones, gratuita susciperent odia & execrabili haberentur in nomine? Quod si falsa ut dicitis historia illa rerum est, unde tam brevi tempore totus mundus ista religione completus est? Aut in unam coire qui potuerunt mentem gentes regionibus dissitæ, ventis cælique convexionibus dimotæ? Asseverationibus illectæ sunt nudis, inductæ in spes cassas, & in pericula capitis immittere se sponte temeraria desperatione voluerunt, cum nihil tale vidissent quod eas in hos cultus novitatis suæ possit excitare miraculo. Imo quia hæc omnia ab ipso cernebant geri & ab ejus præconibus qui per orbem totum missi beneficia patris & munera sanandis animis hominibusque portabant, veritatis ipsius vi victæ, & dederunt se Deo, nec in magnis posuere dispendiis membra vobis projicere, & viscera sua lanianda præbere.* The substance of whose discourse is, that it is im-

*Arnob. c. gentes l. 1.*

C. gentes lib. 2.

p. 44.

possible to suppose so many persons of so many Nations to be so far besotted and insatuated, as not only to believe a Religion to be true which was contrary to that they were educated in, but to venture their lives as well as estates upon it, had it not been discovered to them in a most certain and infallible way by such who had been eye-witnesses of the actions and miracles of Christ and his Apostles. And as he elsewhere speaks, *Vel hæc saltem fidem vobis faciant argumenta credendi quod jam per omnes terras in tam brevi tempore & parvo immensi nominis hujus sacramenta diffusa sunt; quod nulla jam natio est tam barbari moris, & mansuetudinem nesciens, quæ non ejus amore versa molliverit asperitatem suam, & in placidos sensus assumpta tranquillitate migraverit; quod tam magnus ingenii præditi Oratores, Grammatici, Rhetores, Consulti juris ac Medici, Philosophiæ etiam secreta rimantes, magisteria hæc expetunt, spretis quibus paulo ante fidebant, &c.* Will not this persuade the world what firm foundations the faith of Christians stands on, when in so short a time it is spread over all parts of the world? that by it the most inhumane and barbarous Nations are softened into more than civility? That men of the greatest wits and parts, Orators, Grammarians, Rhetoricians, Lawyers, Physicians, Philosophers, who not? have forsaken their former sentiments, and adhered to the doctrine of Christ. Now, I say, if the power of education be so strong upon the minds of men to persuade them of the truth of the Religion they are bred up under, (which Atheistically disposed persons make so much advantage of,) this is so far from weakning the truth of Christianity, that it proves a great confirmation of it, because it obtained so much upon its first Preaching in the world, notwithstanding the highest prejudices from education were against it. If then men be so prone to believe that to be most true, which they have been educated under, it must argue a more than ordinary evidence and power in that Religion which unsettles so much the principles of education, as to make men not only question the truth of them, but to renounce them, and embrace a Religion contrary to them.

Sect. 21.

Especially when we withall consider what strong holds these principles of education were backed with among the Heathens, when the doctrine of Christ was first divulged among them, i. e. what plausible pretences they had of continuing in the Religion which they were brought up in, and why they should not exchange it for Christianity; and those were,

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1. *The pretended antiquity of their religion above the Christian*; the main thing pleaded against the Christians was *divortium ab institutis majorum*, that they thought themselves wiser than their fore-fathers; and Symmachus, Lybanus, and others, plead this most in behalf of Paganism; *servanda est tot sæculis fides, & sequendi sunt nobis parentes qui secuti sunt feliciter suos*; their religion pleaded prescription against any other, and they were resolved to follow the steps of their Ancestors wherein they thought themselves happy and secure. Cæcilius in Minutius Felix first argues much against dogmatizing in religion, but withall says it most becomes a lover of truth, *Majorum excipere disciplinam, religiones traditas colere, deos quos à parentibus ante imbutus es timere; nec de numinibus ferre sententiam, sed prioribus credere*. So Arnobius tells us the main thing objected against the Christians was *novellam esse religionem nostram, & ante dies natam propemodum paucos, neque vos potuisse antequam & patriam relinquere, & in barbaros ritus peregrinosque traduci*. And Cotta in Tully long before, laid this down as the main principle of Pagan-religion, *majoribus nostris etiam nulla ratione reddita credere*, to believe the tradition of our Fathers, although there be no evidence in reason for it: And after he had discovered the vanity of the Stoical arguments about Religion, concludes with this as the only thing he resolved his Religion into, *Mihi unum satis erit, majores nostros ita tradidisse*, It is enough for me that it comes by tradition from our fore-fathers. Lactantius fully sets forth the manner of pleading used by the Heathens against the Christians in the point of antiquity. *Hæ sunt religiones, quas sibi à majoribus suis traditas, pertinacissime tueri ac defendere perseverant; nec considerant quales sint, sed ex hoc probatas atque veras esse confidunt, quod eas veteres tradiderunt; tantaque est auctoritas vetustatis, ut inquirere in eam scelus esse dicatur*. The English is, They accounted tradition infallible, and knew no other way whereby to find the truth of Religion but by its conveyance from their fore-fathers. How like herein do they speak to those who contend for the corruptions crept into the Christian Church? who make use of the same pretences for them, viz. that they were delivered down from the Fathers; *tantaque est auctoritas vetustatis, ut inquirere in eam scelus esse dicatur*; who are we who will see further than Antiquity? But it is no wonder if Antiquity be accompanied with dimness of

*Tertul. ad Nat. l. 1. cap. 10. Symmach. ep. l. 10. ep. 61. Lyban. orat. de Templis.*

*Minut. Felix. p. 6.*

*Arnob. c. gent. l. 2. pag. 90.*

*De nat. Deorum l. 3.*

*Lactant. de error. l. 2. c. 6.*

of sight ; and so it was undoubtedly as to the *Pagan world* ; and as to the *Christian* too, when such a mixture of *Heathenism* came into it. And the very same arguments by which the pleaders for *Christianity* did justify the truth of their Religion, notwithstanding this pretended antiquity, will with equal force hold for a reformation of such inveterate abuses, which under a pretence of *Antiquity*, have crept into the *Christian Church*. *Nullus pudor est ad meliora transire*, saith *Ambrose* in his answer to *Symmachus*, what shame is it to grow better ? *Quid facies ?* saith *Lactantius*, majoresne potius an rationem sequeris ? Si rationem maris, discedere te necesse est ab institutis & auctoritate majorum : quoniam id solum rectum est, quod ratio præscribit. Sin autem pietas majores sequi suadet : fateris igitur & stultos illos esse qui excogitatis contra rationem religionibus servierint ; & te ineptum qui id colas quod falsum esse conviceris. Where reason and mere authority of fore-fathers stand in competition, he is more a child than a man that knows not on which side to give his suffrage. But with the greatest strength, and clearest reason *Arnobius* speaks in this case. Itaque cum nobis intenditis aversionem à religione priorum, causam convenit ut inspiciatis, non factum, nec quid reliquerimus opponere, sed secuti quid simus potissimum contueri. When you charge us, saith he, that we are revolted from the religion of our fore-fathers, you ought not presently to condemn the fact, but to examine the reasons of it ; neither ought you so much to look at what we have left, as what it is we have embraced. Nam si mutare sententiam culpa est ulla vel crimen, & à veteribus institutis in alias res novas voluntatesque migrare, criminatio ista & vos spectat, qui toties vitam consuetudinemque mutastis ; qui in mores alios, atque alios ritus priorum condemnatione transistis. If mere departing from the Religion of our ancestors be the great fault, all those who own themselves to be *Christians*, were themselves guilty of it when they revolted from *Heathenism*. If it be here said that the case is different, because there was sufficient reason for it, which there is not as to the corruptions of the *Christian Church* ; if so, then all the dispute is taken off from the matter of fact, or the revolt to the causes inducing to it ; and if the *Protestant* be not able as to the causes of our separation from *Rome* to manifest that they were sufficient, let him then be triumphed over by the *Romanist*, and not before. I assert then, and that with

*Ambros. ep. c.*  
*Symmach.*

*De orig. error.*  
*l. 2. c. 6.*

*C. gent. l. 2.*



with much assurance of mind, that the *principles* of the *Reformation* are *justifiable* upon the same grounds of *reason*, which the *embracing Christianity* was, when men of *Heathens* became *Christians*; and that the *arguments* made use of by the *Romanists* against our *separation* from them, are such as would have *justified* a *Pagan Philosopher* in not *embracing Christianity*. For if it be *unlawfull* for any *party* of men, to *divide* from others in a *matter* of *Religion* which pretends *antiquity* and *universality*, it had been *unlawfull* for a *Philosopher* to have *deserted Paganism*, as well as for a *Protestant* to depart from *Rome*. For according to the *principles* of the *Romanists*, the *judgment* in the *cause* of the *separation*, and of the *truth* of *Religion* lies in that *party* from which we *depart*; if we do now but *apply* this to the old *Roman Senate* or *Emperors* in the *case* of *Christian Religion* and *dividing* from *Heathen Worship*, we shall quickly see how *easy* a *matter* it will be to make *Christianity* it self a *Schism*, and the *doctrine* of *Christ* the *greatest* *heresie*. But as *strong* as those *pretences* were then, or have been since, the *power* of the *doctrine* of *Christ* hath been so *great*, as to *conquer* them, and thereby to *manifest*, that it was of *God*, when such potent *prejudices* were not able to *withstand* it. Of which *Antiquity* is the first.

2. *The large and universal spread of Pagan Religion*, when *Christianity* came into the world; there was never so great *Catholicism*, as in *Heathen Worship*, when the *Apostles* first appeared in the *Gentile world*. *Inde adeo per universa imperia, provincias, oppida, videmus singulos sacrorum ritus gentiles habere,* Minut. in Octavio, p. 6. & *Deos colere municipes*, saith *Cæcilius* in *Minutius Felix*. The great charge against the *Christians* was *Novellism*, that they brought in a *strange* and *unheard-of Religion*. The common *Question* was, *where was your Religion before Jesus of Nazareth?* as it hath been since, *where was your Religion before Luther?* and the same *answer* which served then, will stand *unmovable* now, *there where no other Religion is, in the Word of God*. For this was the *weapon* whereby the *Primitive Christians* defended themselves against the *assaults* of *Paganism*, and the *evidences* they brought that the *doctrine* preached by them, and contained in the *Scriptures*, was *originally* from *God*, were the only *means* of *overthrowing Paganism*, notwithstanding its *pretended universality*.

3. *Settle-*

Apol. c. 38.

Observat. in  
Arnob. l. 4.Hiflor. l. 27.  
Arnob. l. 4.  
Lactant. l. 5.  
c. 11.

3. *Settlement by Laws of Heathen Worship.* This was so much pretended and pleaded for, that as far as we can find, by the *History of the Primitive Church*, the pretence on which the *Christians* suffered, was *sedition*, and *opposing the established Laws*. The *Christians* were reckoned *inter illicitas factiones*, as appears by *Tertullian*, among *unlawfull Corporations*; the *Politicians* and *States-men* were all for preserving the *Laws*; they troubled not themselves much about any *Religion*, but only *that* which was settled by *Law*, they sought to uphold, because the *acting* contrary to it might bring some disturbance to the civil *State*. There were several *Laws* which the *Christians* were then brought under, and condemned for the breach of. 1. *The Law against Hæteria, or Conventicles*, as they were pleased frequently to style the *meeting of Christians together*; thence the *places* where the *Christians* assembled for *worship*, were commonly called *Conventicula*; Ita appellabant loca, saith *Heraldus*, ubi congregabantur Christiani oraturi, & verbi divini interpretationem accepturi, ac sacras Synaxes habituri: but *Elmenhorstius* more shortly; Conventicula loca sunt ubi Christiani congregati orare consueverunt. The *places* where the *Christians* did meet and pray together, were called *Conventicles*: in *Easlica Sicinnini* ubi ritus Christiani est conventiculum, saith *Ammianus Marcellinus*; cur immaniter conventicula dirui? saith *Arnobius*; qui universum populum cum ipso pariter conventiculo concremavit, as *Lactantius* likewise speaks. Now the reason of the name was, because the *Heathens* judged these *assemblies* of *Christians* to be *Illegal Societies*. For which we are to understand; that in the time of the *Roman Emperours*, when they grew suspicious of their own *safety*, they severely prohibited all those *Sodalitia*, or *Societies* and *Colledges*, which were very much in use in the *Roman Common-wealth*, in imitation of the *traietoi* in the *Cities of Greece*. These were such *societies* of persons, which voluntarily confederated together either for some particular *design*, or for preserving *Love and Friendship* among each other, and thence had their frequent *meetings* in common together. Now the more numerous these were, and the more closely they confederated, the more jealous eye the *Roman Emperours* had upon them, because of some *clandestine designs*, which they suspected might be carried on for disturbance of the publick *Peace* in such *suspicious meetings*. Thence came



came out many particular *Edicts* of the *Emperours* against all such kinds of *societies*.

Now when the *Christians* began to be somewhat *numerous*, and had according to the principles of their *Religion* frequent *Assemblies* for *Divine worship*, and did *confederate* together by such *Symbols*, of being *washed* with *water*, and *eating* and *drinking* together (which was all the *Heathens* apprehended by their use of *Baptism*, and the *Lord's Supper*) the *Pro-consuls* and other *Magistrates* in their several *Provinces* bring the *Christians* under these *Edicts*, and so punished them for the breach of the *Laws*. Which as appears by *Pliny* his *Epistle* to *Trajan* was the only account on which the *wiser Heathens* did proceed against the *Christians*; for we see he troubled not himself much about the *truth* and *evidence* of *Christian Religion*, but such persons were brought before him, and after he had *interrogated* them whether they were *Christians*, or no, *several times*, if they *persisted*, he then *punished* them not so much for their *Religion*, as for their *obstinacy* and *contempt* of *authority*. For so much is implied in those words of his, *Neque enim dubitabam, quaecumque esset quod faterentur, pervicaciam certe, & inflexibilem obstinationem debere puniri: That what-ever their Religion was, their obstinacy and disobedience deserved punishment.* That which the *Christians* now pleaded for themselves, why they should not be reckoned among the *factions* of the people, was that which they gave in answer to *Pliny*, that all their fault was, *Quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire, carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere secum invicem; seque sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent.* That they were wont upon their solemn days to meet together for *divine worship*, and to covenant with each other only for the practice of those things which were as much for the good of mankind as their own, viz. that they would not wrong and defraud others; as to their bodies or estates. And *Tertullian* approves of the *Law* against *factions*, as *de providentia & modestia publica, ne civitas in partes scinderetur*, as wisely intended to prevent *Seditious*; but withall pleads, that the society of *Christians* could not be reckoned *inter illicitas factiones*; for, saith he, *hæc coitio Christianorum merito sane illicita si illicitis par; merito damnanda si quis de ea queritur eo titulo quo de factionibus*

*Lib. 10. ep. 97.*

*Apolog. cap. 38.*

*bus querela est. In cujus perniciem aliquando convenimus? Hoc sumus congregati quod & dispersi; hoc universi quod & singuli; neminem ludentes, neminem contristantes; quum probi, quum boni coeunt, quum pii, quum casti congregantur, non est factio dicenda sed curia. If, saith he, the societies of Christians were like others, there might be some reason to condemn them, under the head of factions: but as long as we meet together for no man's injury, that whether divided, or assembled, we are still the same, that we grieve and injure no body; when such a company of good men meet together, it is rather a Council than a Faction.*

2. Another Law the Christians were brought under, was, that against Innovations in Religion; thence it was laid so much to the charge of the Christians, that they did *ἑναντίως*, go contrary to the established Law; as Porphyrie said of Origen, because he was a Christian, he did *χριστιανῶς ἑναντίως*, and when he speaks of Ammonius revolting from Christianity to Paganism, *ἐνδὺς πρὸς τὴν καὶ νόμους πολιτείαν μετεβάλλει*, he turned to the way of life, which was agreeable to the established Laws. Now Christianity was every-where looked on as a great Innovation, infomuch that the Christians were accused to be *legum, morum, naturæ inimici*, as enemies to mankind as well as the Laws, because they drew men off from that way of Religion which mankind had generally agreed in. Thence *Æmilianus* the *Præfect* of Egypt, when he bids the Christians return to Paganism, he used these expressions, *ὅτι τὸ καὶ φύσιν τρέπειν οὐκ ἐπιλαβέμεναι ἢ καὶ ὅτι φύσιν*, to return to the common sense of mankind, and to forget what was so much against it; as he supposed Christianity to be. When Paul preached at Athens, his first accusation was, that he was a Preacher of strange Deities, because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection. And *Demetrius* at Ephesus knew no such potent argument against Paul, as that his Religion destroyed the worship of Diana, whom all Asia and the world worship. So that the Primitive Christians were then accounted the *Antipodes* to the whole world, on which account they were so severely dealt with; most *Common-wealths* observing the counsel of *Mecænas* to *Augustus*, in *Dio*, to be sure to have a watchfull eye upon all Innovations in Religion, because they tend so much to the disturbance of the Civil State.

3. The



3. The Law of Sacrilege. Thence *Laſtantiuſ* calls their Laws, *Conſtitutiones Sacrilegæ*. *Quin etiam ſcleratiffimi homi-* *Laſtant. l. 5.*  
*cidæ contra pios jura impia condiderunt; nam & conſtitutiones* *cap. 11.*  
*Sacrilegæ, & diſputationes Jurisperitorum leguntur injuſtæ; and*  
*as he tells us, Domitius Ulpianuſ had collected all thoſe Re-*  
*ſcripta nefaria together, which concerned the Chriſtians;*  
*from hence it was, Chriſtianity by Pliny, is called amentia, by* *Plin. ep. l. 10.*  
*Tacituſ exitiabilis ſuperſtitio, by Suetoniuſ Superſtitio nova &* *ep. 97.*  
*exitiabilis; ſo much did theſe three great men agree, in con-* *Tacit. An. l. 15.*  
*demning the beſt Religion in the world for madneſs, and new,* *Sueton. in Ne-*  
*and deteſtable Superſtition; the ground of the great pique was,* *rone.*  
*the enmity declared by Chriſtians againſt the Idolatrous Temples,*  
*and worſhip of the Heathens.*

4. The Law againſt Treason; for ſometimes they proceeded  
 ſo high, as to accuſe the Chriſtians *leſæ Majeſtatiſ*, and thence *Tertul Ap. c. 27.*  
 they are commonly called *publici hoſtes*, enemies to all civil *c. 35.*  
 Government. Which they inſerr'd from hence: 1. *Be cauſe*  
*they would not ſacrifice for the Emperour's ſafety; Ideo commit-* *Apol. c. 29.*  
*timuſ, ſaith Tertullian, in Majeſtatem Imperatorum, quia illoſ*  
*non ſubjicimuſ rebus ſuiſ; Quia non ludimuſ de officio ſaluſiſ eo-*  
*rum, qui eam non putamuſ in manibuſ eſſe plumbatiſ. The ac-*  
*cuſation for Treason lay in their reſuſing to ſupplicate the Idoluſ*  
*for the Emperour's welfare. 2. Be cauſe they would not ſwear*  
*by the Emperour's Genius. Thence Saturniuſ ſaid to the Mar-* *Herald. in Ter-*  
*tyr, Tantum jura per geniuſ Caſariſ noſtri, if he would but* *tul.*  
*ſwear by the Genius of Caſar, he ſhould be ſaved. Yet though* *Apol. cap. 29.*  
*they reſuſed to ſwear by the Emperour's Genius, they did not*  
*reſuſe to teſtifie their Allegiance, and to ſwear by the Empe-*  
*rouſ's ſafety. Sed & juramuſ, ſaith Tertullian, ſicut non per ge-* *Apol. c. 32.*  
*niuſ Caſarum, ita per ſaluſtem eorum quæ eſt auguſtior omnibuſ*  
*geniſ. 3. Be cauſe they would not worſhip the Emperourſ as*  
*Godſ; which was then grown a common cuſtom. Non enim*  
*Deum Imperatoreſ dicam, vel quia mentiri neſcio, vel quia il-* *Cap. 33.*  
*luſ deridere non audeo, vel quia nec ipſe ſe Deum volet dici ſi*  
*homo ſit, as the ſame Authour ſpeakſ. Nay the Primitive*  
*Chriſtians were very ſcrupuloſ of calling the Emperour Do-*  
*minuſ, hoc enim Dei eſt cognomen, be cauſe the name Lord waſ*  
*an attribute of God's, and applied as hiſ name to him in Scrip-*  
*ture. The reaſon of thiſ ſcrupuloſity waſ not, from any que-*  
*ſtion they made of the Sovereignty of Princeſ, or their obliga-*

tion to obedience to them, (which they are very free in the acknowledgment of,) but from a *jealousie* and just *suspicion* that something of *Divine honour* might be implied in it, when the adoration of *Princes* was grown a custom. Therefore *Tertulian* to prevent mis-understandings, saith, *Dicam plane Imperatorem Dominum, sed more Communi, sed quando non cogor ut Dominum Dei vice dicam.* They refused not the name in a common sence, but as it implied *Divine honour*.

Cap. 34.

Cap. 35.

Cap. 38.

4. Because they would not observe the publick festivals of the Emperors in the way that others did, which it seems were observed with abundance of looseness and debauchery by all sorts of persons ; and as *Tertullian* smartly says, *Malorum morum licentia pietas erit ; & occasio luxuriæ religio deputabitur ?* Debauchery is accounted a piece of loyalty, and intemperance a part of religion. Which made the *Christians* rather hazard the reputation of their loyalty, than bear a part in so much rudeness as was then used, and thence they abhorred all the solemn spectacles of the *Romans* ; *Nihil est nobis*, saith the same Author, *dictu, visu, auditu, cum insania Circi, cum impudicitia Theatri, cum atrocitate arenæ, cum Xysti vanitate.* They had nothing to do either with the madness of the Cirque, or the immodesty of the Theatre, or the cruelty of the Amphitheatre, or the vanity of the publick wrestlings. We see then what a hard Province the *Christians* had, when so many Laws were laid as bird-lime in their way to catch them, that it was impossible for them to profess themselves *Christians*, and not run into a præmunire by their Laws. And therefore it cannot be conceived that many out of affectation of novelty should then declare themselves *Christians*, when so great hazards were run upon the professing of it. Few soft-spirited men, and lovers of their own ease, but would have found some fine distinctions and nice evasions to have reconciled themselves to the publick Laws by such things which the Primitive *Christians* so unanimously refused, when tending to Prophaneness or Idolatry. And from this discourse we cannot but conclude with the Apostle Paul, That the weapons whereby the Apostles and Primitive *Christians* encountered the Heathen world, were not fleshly or weak, but exceeding strong and powerfull, in that they obtained so great a conquest over the imaginations and carnal reasonings of men (which were their strong holds they secured themselves in) as to make them readily

1 Cor. 10. 4, 5.



readily to forsake their *Heathen worship*, and become chearfull servants to *Christ*. Thus we see the power of the doctrine of *Christ*, which prevailed over the principles of education, though backt with pretended antiquity, universality, and establishment by civil Laws.

Sect. 22.

2.

But this will further appear if we consider that not only the matters of faith were contrary to the principles of education, but because many of them seemed incredible to men's natural reason; that we cannot think persons would be over-forward to believe such things. Every one being so ready to take any advantage against a Religion which did so little flatter corrupt nature either as to its power or capacity; insomuch that those who preached this Doctrine, declared openly to the world, that such persons who would judge of the Christian Doctrine, by such principles which mere natural reason did proceed upon (such one I suppose it is whom the Apostle calls *ἄλογος ἀνθρώπου*, one that owned nothing but natural reason, 1 Cor. 2. 14. whereby to judge of Divine Truths) could not entertain matters of faith, or of Divine revelation, because such things would seem but folly to him that owned no higher principle than Philosophy, or that did not believe any Divine inspiration; neither can such a one know them, because a Divine revelation is the only way to come to a thorough understanding of them: and a person who doth not believe such a Divine revelation, it is impossible he should be a competent judge of the truth of the Doctrine of Christ. So that the only ground of receiving the Doctrine of the Gospel is upon a Divine revelation, that God himself by his Son and his Apostles, hath revealed these deep mysteries to the world, on which account it is we are bound to receive them, although they go beyond our reach and comprehension. But we see generally in the Heathen world how few of those did believe the Doctrine of Christ in comparison, who were the great admirers of the Philosophy, and way of learning which was then cried up: the reason was, because Christianity not only contained far deeper mysteries than any they were acquainted with, but delivered them in such a way of authority, commanding them to believe the doctrine they preached on the account of the Divine Authority of the revealers of it. Such a way of proposal of doctrines to the world the Philosophy of the Greeks was unacquainted with, which on that

that account they *derided* as not being *sui*ted to the *exact method* which their *sciences* proceeded in. No doubt had the *Apostles* come among the *Greeks* *μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας* with a great deal of *pomp* and *ostentation*, and had fed men's *curiosities* with *vain* and *unnecessary speculations*, they might have had as many *followers* among the *Greeks* for their *sakes*, as *Christ* had among the *Jews* for the *sake* of the *loaves*. But the *matters* of the *Gospel* being more of *inward worth* and *moment*, than of *outward pomp* and *shew*, the *vain* and *empty Greeks* presently find a *quarrel* with the *manner* of *proposing* them; that they came not in a *way* of *clear demonstration*, but stood so much upon *faith* as soon as they were delivered. Thence *Celsus* and *Galen* think they have *reason* enough to reject the *Laws* of *Moses* and *Christ*, because *Celsus* calls them νόμους ἀναποδείκτους, *Gal.* *Christianity*, διατεταγμένον ἀναπόδεικτον, that they were such *doctrines* which require *faith* and *obedience*, without giving men's *reason* an account of the things commanded. As though the *authority* of a *Legislator* sufficiently manifested, were not enough to enforce a *Law*, unless a sufficient account were given of the *thing* required to the purblind reason of every individual person acted by *passions* and *private interests*, as to the *justice* and *equity* of it. And so the *primary obligation* on man's part to *faith* and *obedience*, must arise not from the *evidence* of *Divine Authority*, but of the *thing* it self which is *revealed*, to the most partial judgment of every one to whom it is *proposed*. Which those who know how short the stock of *reason* is at the best in men, and how easily that which is, is *fashioned* and *moulded* according to *prejudices* and *interests* already entertained, will look upon only as a *design* to comply with the carnal *desires* of men, in that thereby none shall be bound to go any further, than this *blind* and *corrupted guide* shall lead them. Now these being the *terms* on which the *Gospel* of *Christ* must have expected entertainment in the *Gentile world*, how impossible had it been ever to have found any *success* among men, had there not been sufficient *evidence* given by a *power* of *miracles*, that however *strange* and *incredible* the *doctrine* might seem, yet it was to be *believed*, because there was sufficient *means* to convince men that it was of *Divine revelation*.

Orig. l. 1 c. Cels.  
Gal. de differ.  
puls. lib. 2. c. 4.



Neither were the *matters of faith* only contrary to the *inclinations* of the world, but so were the *precepts of life* or those *things in Christianity* which concerned *practise*. There are two *things* which are the main *scope and design* of *Christianity* in reference to men's *lives*, and to take them off from their *sins*, and from the *world*; and of all things these are they which men's *hearts* are so bewitched with. Now the *precepts* of the *Gospel* are such which require the greatest *purity of heart and life*, which call upon men to *deny themselves*, and all *ungodliness*, and *worldly lusts*, and to live *soberly*, and *righteously*, and *godly in this present world*; that, *all that name the name of Christ* must depart from *iniquity*; that, *all true Christians* must be cleansed from all *filthiness of flesh and spirit*, and must perfect *holiness in the fear of God*. And the *Gospel* enforceth these *precepts of holiness* with the most terrible *denunciations* of the *wrath of God* on those who *disobey them*; that, *the Lord Jesus Christ* shall be revealed from *Heaven* with his mighty *Angels* in *flaming fire*, taking *vengeance* on them that *know not God*, and that *obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ*. That, *the wrath of God* is revealed from *Heaven* against all *ungodliness* and *unrighteousness* of men, who hold the *truth in unrighteousness*. That, no *persons* who live in the *habitual practise* of any known *sin*, shall inherit the *Kingdom of God*. That, no *man* should deceive them with *vain words*, for because of these *things* comes the *wrath of God* upon the *children of disobedience*; that men do but *vainly flatter themselves* when they seek to *reconcile unholy lives* with the *hopes of future happiness*; for *without holiness*, no *man* shall see the *Lord*. And then in reference to the *things* of this *present life* which men *busie themselves* so much about, the *Gospel* declares, that, *they who love this world*, the *love of the Father* is not in them; that, the *friendship of this world* is *enmity with God*; and *whosoever will be a friend of the world* is an *enemy to God*: That *Christians* must not set their *affections on Earth*, but on the *things in Heaven*; That the *conversation of true Christians* is in *Heaven*. That, we ought not to *lay up our treasure on Earth*, but in *Heaven*; That, we must not look at the *things which are seen*, but at the *things which are not seen*; for the *things which are seen* are *temporal*, but the *things which are not seen* are *eternal*. Now the whole *design* of the *doctrine of Christ* being to *persuade men* to lead a *holy and heavenly life* while they are

Seet. 23.

Mat. 5. 8, 16,

Tit. 2. 12.

2 Tim. 2. 19.

2 Cor. 7. 1.

2 Thes. 1. 7, 8:

Rom. 1. 18.

1 Cor. 6. 9, 10.

Gal. 4. 20.

Ephes. 5. 5, 6.

Heb. 12. 14.

1 Joh. 2. 14.

James 4. 4.

Col. 3. 1, 2.

Phil. 3. 20.

Mat. 6. 20.

2 Cor. 4. 18.

Col. 1. 12.

are in this world, and thereby to be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the Saints in light, can we think so many men whose hearts were wedded to sin, and the world, could so suddenly be brought off from both without a divine power accompanying that doctrine which was preached to them? And therefore the Apostle saith, ἡ ἐπαύρινον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῷ Χριστῷ, I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; i. e. though the Gospel of Christ be the only true mystery, yet I do not by it as the Heathens are wont to do with their famous Eleusinian mysteries which were kept so secret by all the mystæ and ἐπίσται; but, saith he, I know no reason I have to be ashamed of any thing in the Gospel, that I should labour its concealment to advance its veneration; but the more publick the Gospel is, the more it manifests its power; for through it God is pleased mightily to work, in order to the salvation both of Jew and Gentile. And of all the success of the Gospel, that upon the hearts and lives of men deserves the greatest consideration.

Rom. 1. 16.

The great efficacy and power of the Gospel was abundantly seen in that great alteration which it wrought in all those who were the hearty imbracers of it. The Philosophers did very frequently and deservedly complain of the great inefficacy of all their moral precepts upon the minds of men, and that by all their instructions, *politiora non meliora, ingenia sunt*, men improved more in knowledge than goodness, but now Christianity not only enforced duties on men with greater power and authority: For the Scriptures do, as Saint Austin speaks, *Non tanquam ex Philosophorum concertationibus strepere, sed tanquam ex oraculis & Dei nubibus intonare*, not make some obstreperous clamours, like those tinkling Cymbals, the Philosophers, but awe the souls of men with the majesty of that God from whom they came. Neither was it only a great and empty sound which was heard in the preaching of the Gospel; but when God thundered therein, he broke down the stately Cedars, and shook the wilderness, and made the Hinds to Calve, (as it is said of Thunder, called the voice of the Lord in Scripture,) he humbled the pride of men, unsetled the Gentile world from its former foundations, and wrought great alterations on all those who hearkened to it. The whole design of the Gospel is couched in those words which Saint Paul tells us were spoken to him by Christ himself, when he appointed him to be an Apostle, to open  
men's

August. de Ci-  
vit. Dei, l. 2.  
c. 19.

Psal. 29. 5, 8, 9.



men's eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which were sanctified by faith in Christ. And the efficacy of this doctrine in order to these great ends, was abundantly seen in the preaching of that Apostle, who was so instrumental in converting the world to piety and sobriety, as well as to the doctrine of Christ. What strange persons were the Corinthians before they became Christians! for when the Apostle had enumerated many of the vilest persons of the world, he presently adds, *And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God.* I Cor. 6. 10, 11. The more dangerous the distemper is, the more malignant its nature; the more inveterate its continuance, the greater the efficacy of the remedy which works a cure of it. The power of grace is the more seen in conversion, the greater the sins have been before it. It is an easie matter in comparison to remove a disease at its first on-set, of what it is to cure it when it becomes Chronical. The power of the Gospel wrought upon all sorts and kinds of persons to manifest to the world there was no distemper of men's souls so great, but there was a possibility of a remedy for it; and not only so, but pregnant and visible instances were given of the power and efficacy of it. For they themselves shew of us, saith the Apostle, *what manner of entering in we had among you, and how ye turned to God from Idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from Heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.* I Thes. 1. 9, 10. Now that which manifests the exceeding great power and excellency of the Gospel, was, that it not only turned men from one way of worship to another, which is a matter of no great difficulty, but that it turned men together with that from their lusts and sensuality, to a holy and unblameable life. For men being more in love with their sins, than with their opinions, it must needs be a greater power which draws men from the practice of habitual sins, than that which only makes them change their opinions, or alter the way of worship they were brought up in. This is that which Origen throughout his Books against Celsus triumphs in as the most signal evidence of a Divine power in the Doctrine of Christ, that it wrought so great an alteration on all that truly em-

braced it, that of *vicious, debauched, and dissolute*, it made them *temperate, sober, and religious*, ὅτι πόντος ἀνδρώπυς ὁπρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἀπὸ τῆς χύσεως τοῦ κακῶν, ἐπὶ τῇ χύσει φύσιν ἐν σωφροσύνης καὶ τοῦ λαοπῶν ἀρετῶν βίον. *The Doctrine of Christ did convert the most wicked persons who embraced it, from all their debaucheries, to a life most suitable to nature and reason, and to the practice of all virtues.* Therefore certainly the Gospel could not want that commendation among all *ingenuous Moralists*, that it was the most excellent instrument in the world to reform the lives of men, and to promote real goodness in it. When they could not but take notice of so many persons continually so brought off from their follies and vain conversations, to a life, serious, sober, and unblameable; nay and some of the Christians were of so much integrity and goodness, that their greatest enemies were forced to say that their only fault was, that they were Christians. *Bonus vir Cajus Sejus, tantum quod Christianus. A very good man, only a Christian.* But one would think this should have made them have a higher opinion of Christianity, when it did so suddenly make so many good men in the world. Especially when this power was so manifest on such persons who were supposed *uncapable of being reformed by Philosophy, young, illiterate, and mean-spirited persons*; therefore it may be justly supposed that it was not by the strength of their own reason that this alteration was wrought within them, but by that Divine power which was able to tame the most unruly; to instruct the most ignorant, to raise up the most sordid persons to such a generous temper, as to slight the good things of this life, in comparison with those to come. And so remarkable was the difference of life then between those that were Christians, and those who were not (as there is still between true Christians, and mere pretenders) that Origen dares Celsus to compare them in point of morality with any other Societies in the world. αἱ γὰρ τοῦ Θεοῦ Χριστοῦ μαθηταὶ εἶσιν ἐκκλησίαι, συνεξεταζόμεναι καὶ ὧν περιεῖχεται δῆμιον ἐκκλησίαις, ὡς φασὶν ἑῖς ἐν κόσμῳ τις γὰρ ἐκ αὐτῶν ὁμολογεῖται καὶ τὰς χεῖρας τοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐκκλησίας, καὶ συγχεῖται βελτιόρων ἐλάττω, πολλῶν κρείττους πυχάνειν καὶ ἐν πῶς δῆμοις ἐκκλησιῶν; *For the Churches of God, which are disciplined to Christ, being compared with other Societies, shine among them like lights in the world.* For who can but confess, that even the worse

part

C. Celsus, l. 2.  
p. 78. 85. lib. 1.  
p. 21.

Orig. c. Cels. l. 3.  
p. 128.



part of the Christian Churches exceeds the best of the popular Assemblies? For, as he goes on, the Church of God which is at Athens, that is *ἡσυχία καὶ εὐσέβεια*, very quiet and peaceable, because it seeks to approve it self to God; but the popular Assembly at Athens that is *σατωδία*, seditious and quarrelsome, and in nothing comparable to the Church of God there. So it is, if we compare the Churches of Corinth and Alexandria with the Assemblies of the people there. So that any candid inquirer after truth will exceedingly wonder (how such fair Islands should appear nantes in gurgite vasto, in the midst of such a Sea of wickedness as it was in those Cities) how these Churches of God should be planted in such rude and prophane places. So the same Authour goes on to compare the Church's Senate with that of the Cities, the Church's Officers with theirs, and appeals to themselves, that even those among them who were most lukewarm in their office, did yet far exceed all the City-Magistrates in all manner of virtues. From whence he rationally concludes, *εἰ δὲ ταῦθ' ἔσως ἔχει, πῶς ἐκ εὐλογον μὲν νομίζουσιν περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοσαῦτα συζητοῦσι διεκρινόμενοι, ὅτι ἐκ ἡ πυχρότα, θεότης μὲν ἐν αὐτοῖς;* If these things be so, how can it but be most rational to adore the Divinity of Jesus, who was able to accomplish such great things? And that not upon one or two, but upon such great multitudes as were then converted to the Christian faith. We read of one Phædon, and one Polemon brought from their debaucheries by Socrates and Xenocrates, but what are these compared with those who were turned from their sins to God by the Gospel of Christ! καὶ ὁδὸν μὲν τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν, εἰς τὴν Φαίδων καὶ ἐκ δὲ εἰς δευτέρου, καὶ εἰς Πολέμων, μεταβαλόντες ἀπὸ ἀσώτου καὶ μοχθηροτάτου βίου, ἐφιλοσόφησαν ὁδὸν δὲ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐμόνοι τότε οἱ δώδεκα, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ καὶ πολλαπλασίους, &c. The twelve Apostles were but the first-fruits of that plentiful Harvest of Converts which followed afterwards. And although Celsus (like an Epicurean) seems to deny the possibility of any such thing as conversion, because customary sins become a second nature, that no punishments can reform them; Yet, saith Origen, herein he not only contradicts us Christians, but all such as were ἁγναῖως φιλοσοφῶντες, who owned any generous principles of Philosophy, and did not despair of recovering virtue, as a thing feasible by humane nature, and gives instances ad hominem, to prove the possibility of the thing from the ancient Heroes, Hercules and Ulysses, from

Orig. l. 1. p. 150.

Orig. l. 3 p. 150.

the two Philosophers, Socrates and Musonius, and the two famous converts to Philosophy, Phædon and Polemon. But yet, saith he, these are not so much to be wondred at, that the eloquence and reason of the Philosophers should prevail on some very few persons, but that the mean and contemptible language of the Apostles should convert such multitudes from intemperance to sobriety, from injustice to fair-dealing, from cowardice to the highest constancy, yea so great as to lay down their lives for the sake of vertue; how can we but admire so divine a power as was seen in it? And therefore, saith he, we conclude, ὅτι τὰς θείων λόγων αἰετῆσαι κακίαν φυσιώσασάν ἐστιν ἢ μόνον ἢ ἀδύνατον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ πανταχάπερ. That it is so far from being impossible, that it is not at all difficult for corrupt nature to be changed by the Word of God.

Lactant. de fals.  
sap. l. 3. c. 25.

Lactantius excellently manifests that Philosophy could never do so much good in the world as Christianity did, because that was not suited at all to common capacities, and did require so much skill in the Arts to prepare men for it, which it is impossible all should be well skilled in, which yet are as capable of being happy, as any others are. And how inefficacious the precepts of Philosophy were, appears by the Philosophers themselves, who were far from having command by them over their Masterless passions, and were fain sometimes to confess that nature was too head-strong to be kept in by such weak reins as the precepts of Philosophy were: But, saith he, what great command divine precepts have upon the souls of men, daily experience shews.

Cap. 26.

Da mihi virum qui sit iracundus, maledictus, effrenatus; paucissimis Dei verbis, tam placidum quam ovem reddam. Da cupidum, avarum, tenacem; jam tibi eum liberalem dabo, & pecuniam suam plenis manibus largientem. Da timidum doloris ac mortis; jam cruces, & ignes, taurum contemnet. Da libidinosum, adulterum, ganeonem; jam sobrium, castum, continentem videbis. Da crudelem, & sanguinis appetentem; jam in veram clementiam furor ille mutabitur. Da injustum, insipientem, peccatorem; continuo & æquus, & prudens, & innocens erit. In which words that elegant writer doth by a Rhetorical Scheme set out the remarkable alteration which was in any who became true Christians, that although they were passionate, covetous, fearfull, lustfull, cruel, unjust, vitious, yet upon their being Christians, they became mild, liberal, courageous, temperate, mercifull, just and unblameable; which never any were brought to by mere Philo-

phy,



phy, which rather teacheth the art of *concealing vices*, than of *healing them*. But now when *Christianity* was so *effectual* in the cure of those *distempers*, which *Philosophy* gave over as beyond its *skill* and *power*, when it cured them with so great *success*, and that not in a *Paracelsian* way, for them to *relapse* afterwards with greater *violence*, but it did so *thoroughly unsettle the fomes morbi*, that it should never gather to so great a head again; doth not this argue a power more than *Philosophical*, and that could be no less than *Divine power* which tended so much to *reform the world*, and to *promote true goodness* in it?

Thus we have considered the *contrariety* of the doctrine of *Christ* to men's *natural inclinations*, and yet the strange success it had in the world, which in the last place will appear yet more strange, when we add the almost continual opposition it met with from worldly power and policy. Had it been possible for a cunningly-devised fable, or any mere contrivance of imposters to have prevailed in the world, when the most potent and subtle persons bent their whole wits and designs for suppressing it? Whatever it were in others, we are sure of some of the *Roman Emperours*, as *Julian* and *Dioclesian*, that it was their master-design to root out and abolish *Christianity*; and was it only the subtilty of the *Christians* which made these persons give over their work in despair of accomplishing it? If the *Christians* were such subtle men, whence came all their enemies to agree in one common calumny, that they were a company of poor, weak, ignorant, inconsiderable men! and if they were so, how came it to pass that by all their power and wisdom they could never exterminate these persons; but as they cut them down, they grew up the faster, and multiplied by their subtraction of them! There was something then certainly peculiar in *Christianity*, from all other doctrines, that it not only was not advanced by any civil power, but it got ground by the opposition it met with in the world. And therefore it is an observable circumstance, that the first *Christian Emperour* (who acted as Emperour for *Christianity*) viz. *Constantine* (for otherwise I know what may be said for *Philippus*) did not appear in the world 'till *Christianity* had spread it self over most parts of the habitable world. God thereby letting us see, that though the civil power, when become *Christian*, might be very usefull for protecting *Christianity*,

stianity, yet that he stood in no need at all of it, as to the Propagation of it abroad in the world. But we see it was quite otherwise in that Religion which had Mars its ascendant, viz. Mahometism ; For like Paracelsus his Dæmon, it always sate upon the pummel of the sword, and made its way in the world merely by force and violence ; and as its first constitution had much of blood in it, so by it hath it been fed and nourished ever since. But it was quite otherwise with the Christian Religion ; it never thrived better than in the most barren places, nor triumphed more, than when it suffered most ; nor spread it self further than when it encountered the greatest opposition. Because therein was seen the great force and efficacy of the doctrine of Christ, that it bore up men's spirits under the greatest miseries of life, and made them with chearfulness to undergo the most exquisite torments which the cruelty of Tyrants could invent. The Stoicks and Epicureans boasts that their wise man would be happy in the Bull of Phalaris, were but empty and Thraasonical words, which none would venture the truth of by an experiment upon themselves. It was the Christian alone, and not the Epicurean, that could truly say in the midst of torments, *Suave est & nihil curo*, and might justly alter a little of that common saying of the Christians, and say, *Non magna loquimur, sed patimur*, as well as *vivimus* ; the Christians did not speak great things, but do and suffer them. And this gained not only great reputation of integrity to themselves, but much advanced the honour of their Religion in the world, when it was so apparently seen, that no force or power was able to withstand it. Will not this at least persuade you that our Religion is true, and from God, saith Arnobius ? *Quod cum genera paucorum tanta sint à vobis proposita Religionis hujus sequentibus leges, augeatur res magis, & contra omnes minas atque interditi a formidinum animosius populus obnitatur, & ad credendi studium, prohibitionis ipsius stimulis excitetur ? — Itane istud non divinum & sacrum est, aut sine Deo, eorum tantas animorum fieri conversiones ut cum carnifices unci, alique innumeri cruciatus, quemadmodum diximus, impendeant credituris, veluti quadam dulcedine, atque omnium virtutum amore correpti, cognititas accipiant rationes, atque mundi omnibus rebus præponant amicitias Christi ?* That no fears, penalties, or torments, were able to make a Christian alter his profession, but he would rather bid

Arnob. l. 2. c.  
gentes.



*bid adieu to his Life than to his Saviour.* This Origen likewise frequently takes notice of, when Celsus had objected the novelty of Christianity; *The more wonderfull it is (saith Origen) that in so short a time it should so largely spread it self in the world; for if the cure of men's bodies be not wrought without Divine Providence, how much less the cure of so many thousands of souls which have been converted at once to Humanity and Christianity, especially when all the powers of the world were from the first engaged to hinder the progress of this doctrine, and yet notwithstanding all this opposition,* ἐνίκησε, μὴ πεφυκὸς κωλύεσθαι ὡς λόγος ἐστὶ καὶ ἡμῶν πλείων ἀνισχυόντων ἰσχυέτερος, πάσης μὲν Ἑλλάδος, ἀπὸ πλείον ἢ τὸ βασιλεὺς ἐκράτησε, καὶ μετεποίησε μυρίας ὅσας ψυχὰς ἀπὸ τὴν κατ' αὐτὸν διοσέβειαν. *The Word of God prevailed, as not being able to be stopt by men, and became Master over all its enemies, and not only spread it self quite through Greece, but through a great part of the world besides, and converted an innumerable company of souls to the true worship and service of God. Thus we have now manifested from all the circumstances of the propagation of the doctrine of Christ, what evidence there was of a Divine power accompanying of it, and how usefull the first miracles were in order to it.*

## C H A P. X.

## The difference of true Miracles from false.

*The unreasonableness of rejecting the evidence from miracles, because of impostures. That there are certain rules of distinguishing true miracles from false, and divine from diabolical, proved from God's intention in giving a power of miracles, and the providence of God in the world. The inconvenience of taking away the rational grounds of faith, and placing it on self-evidence. Of the self-evidence of the Scriptures, and the insufficiency of that for resolving the question about the authority of the Scriptures. Of the pretended miracles of Impostors and false Christs, as Barchochebas, David el-David and others. The rules whereby to judge true miracles from false.*

- 1. True Divine miracles are wrought to confirm a Divine testimony. No miracles necessary for the certain conveyance of a Divine testimony: proved from the evidences that the Scriptures could not be corrupted.*
- 2. No miracles Divine which contradict Divine revelation. Of Popish miracles.*
- 3. Divine miracles leave Divine effects on those who believe them. Of the miracles of Simon Magus.*
- 4. Divine miracles tend to the overthrow of the Devil's power in the world: the antipathy of the Doctrine of Christ to the Devil's design in the world.*
- 5. The distinction of true miracles from others, from the circumstances and manner of their operation. The miracles of Christ compared with those of the Heathen Gods.*
- 6. God makes it evident to all impartial judgments that Divine miracles exceed Created power. This manifested from the unparallel'd miracles of Moses and our Saviour. From all which the rational evidence of Divine revelation is manifested, as to the persons whom God employs to teach the world.*

*Def. 1.* **H**AVING thus far stated the cases wherein miracles may justly be expected as a rational evidence of Divine authority in the persons whom God employs by way of peculiar message to the world, and in the prosecution of this discourse mani-



manifested the *evidences* of *Divine authority* in *Moses* and the *Prophets*, and in our *Saviour* and his *Apostles*; the only remaining *question* concerning this subject, is, *How we may certainly distinguish true and real miracles from such as are only pretended and counterfeit?* For it being as evident that there have been *impostures* and *delusions* in the world as *real miracles*, the minds of *men* will be wholly to seek when to rely upon the *evidence* of *miracles* as an *argument* of *Divine authority* in those persons who do them, unless a way be found out to distinguish them from each other. But if we can make it appear, that, unless men through *weakness* of judgment or *incogitancy* deceive themselves, they may have certain *evidence* of the *truth* of *miracles*, then there can be nothing wanting as to the *establishment* of their *minds* in the *truth* of that *Doctrine* which is confirmed by them. There hath been nothing which hath made men of better *affections* than *understandings*, so ready to suspect the *strength* of the *evidence* from *miracles* concerning *Divine testimony*, as the multitude of *impostures* in the world under the name of *miracles*, and that the *Scripture* it self tells us we must not hearken to such as come with *lying wonders*. But may we not therefore safely rely on such *miracles* which we have certain *evidence* could not be wrought but by *Divine power*, because forsooth the *Devil* may sometimes *abuse* the *ignorance* and *credulity* of unwary men? or is it because the *Scripture* forbids us to *believe* such as should come with a *pretence* of *miracles*, therefore we cannot rely on the *miracles* of *Christ* himself? which is as much as to say, because the *Scripture* tells us that we must not believe *every spirit*, therefore we must believe *none* at all; or because we must not entertain any *other doctrine* besides the *Gospel*, therefore we have no *reason* to believe that. For the *ground* whereby we are assured by the *Scriptures*, that the *testimony* of *Christ* was *divine*, and therefore his *doctrine* true, is because it was confirmed by such *miracles* as he did; now if that *argument* were *insufficient* which the *Scriptures* tell us was the great *evidence* of *Christ's* being sent from *God*, we cannot give our selves a sufficient account in point of *evidence*, on which we believe the *doctrine* of the *Gospel* to be true and *divine*. But the only *rational pretence* of any scruple in this case must be a supposed *uncertainty* in our rules of judging concerning the *nature*

of miracles ; for there be no certain *σημεία* or notes of difference, whereby to know Divine miracles from delusions of senses and the impostures of the Devil, I must confess that there is an apparent insufficiency in the evidence from miracles ; but if there be any certain rules of proceeding in this case, we are to blame nothing but our incredulity, if we be not satisfied by them. For the full clearing of this, I shall first make it appear that there may be certain evidence found out, whereby we may know true miracles from false, and divine from diabolical. And, Secondly, Enquire into those things which are the main notes of difference between them. First, That there may be certain evidence whereby to know the truth of miracles. I speak not of the difference *ex parte rei* between miracles, and those called wonders, as that the one exceed the power of created agents, and the other doth not ; for this leaves the enquirer as far to seek for satisfaction as ever ; for granting that a Divine power is seen in one, and not in the other, he must needs be still dissatisfied, unless it can be made evident to him that such things are from Divine power, and others cannot be. Now the main distinction being placed here in the natures of the things abstractly considered, and not as they bear any evidence to our understandings, instead of resolving doubts it increaseth more ; for, as for instance, in the case of the Magicians Rods turning into Serpents, as well as Moses his ; what satisfaction could this yield to any spectator, to tell him, that in the one there was a Divine power, and not in the other, unless it were made appear by some evidence from the thing, that the one was a mere imposture, and the other a real alteration in the thing it self ? I take it then for granted, that no general discourses concerning the formal difference of miracles and wonders considered in themselves, can afford any rational satisfaction to an inquisitive mind ; that which alone is able to give it, must be something which may be discerned by any judicious and considerative person. And that God never gives to any a power of miracles, but he gives some such ground of satisfaction concerning them, will appear upon these two considerations.

1. From God's intention in giving to any this power of doing miracles. We have largely made it manifest that the end of true miracles is to be a confirmation to the world of the Divine commission



commission of the persons who have it, and that the testimony is *Divine* which is confirmed by it. Now if there be no way to know when *miracles* are true or false, this power is to no purpose at all; for men are as much to seek for satisfaction, as if there had been no such things at all. Therefore if men are bound to believe a *Divine Testimony*, and to rely on the *miracles* wrought by the persons bringing it, as an evidence of it, they must have some assurance that these *miracles* could not come from any but a *Divine Power*.

2. From the Providence of God in the World; which if we own, we cannot imagine that God should permit the Devil, whose only design is to ruine mankind, to abuse the credulity of the world so far, as to have his lying wonders pass uncontrouled, which they must do, if nothing can be found out as a certain difference between such things as are only of *Diabolical*, and such as are of *Divine power*. If then it may be discovered that there is a malignant Spirit which acts in the world and doth produce strange things, either we must impute all strange things to him, which must be to attribute to him an infinite power, or else that there is a being infinitely perfect which crosseth this malignant Spirit in his designs; and if so, we cannot imagine he should suffer him to usurp so much tyranny over the minds of men, as to make those things pass in the more sober and inquisitive part of the world for *Divine miracles* which were only counterfeits and impostures. If then the Providence of God be so deeply engaged in the discovering the designs of Satan, there must be some means of this discovery, and that means can be supposed to be no other in this case, but some rational and satisfactory evidence, whereby we may know when strange and miraculous things are done by Satan to deceive men, and when by a *Divine Power* to confirm a *Divine Testimony*.

But how is it possible, say some, that miracles should be any ground on which to believe a testimony *Divine*, when Christ himself hath told us, that there shall arise false Christs, and false Prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that if it were possible they should deceive the very elect? and the Apostle tells us that the coming of Antichrist will be with all power and signs, and lying wonders. How then can we fix on miracles as an evidence of *Divine Testimony*, when we see they

Sect. 2.

Mat. 24. 24.

2 Thes. 2. 9.

are common to good and bad men, and may seal indifferently either truth or falshood? To this I reply;

1. Men are guilty of doing no small *disservice* to the doctrine of Christ, when upon such weak and frivolous pretences they give so great an advantage to infidelity, as to call in question the validity of that which yielded so ample a testimony to the truth of Christian Religion. For if once the rational grounds on which we believe the Doctrine of Christ to be true and divine, be taken away, and the whole evidence of the truth of it be laid on things not only derided by men of Atheistical spirits, but in themselves such as cannot be discerned or judged of by any but themselves, upon what grounds can we proceed to convince an unbeliever that the doctrine which we believe is true! If they tell him, that as light and fire manifest themselves, so doth the doctrine of the Scripture to those who believe it; It will be soon replied, that self-evidence in a matter of faith can imply nothing but either a firm persuasion of the mind concerning the thing propounded; or else that there are such clear evidences in the thing it self, that none who freely use their reason can deny it; the first can be no argument to any other person any further than the authority of the person who declares it to have such self-evidence to him, doth extend it self over the mind of the other; and to ones self it seems a strange way of arguing, *I believe the Scriptures because they are true, and they are true because I believe them*; for self-evidence implies so much, if by it be meant the persuasion of the mind, that the thing is true; but if by self-evidence be further meant such clear evidence in the matter propounded, that all who do consider it, must believe it. I then further enquire whether this evidence doth lie in the naked proposal of the things to the understanding; and if so, then every one, who assents to this proposition, that the whole is greater than the part, must likewise assent to this, that the Scripture is the Word of God; or whether doth the evidence lie, not in the naked proposal, but in the efficacy of the Spirit of God on the minds of those to whom it is propounded. Then, 1. The self-evidence is taken off from the written word which was the object, and removed to a quite different thing which is the efficient cause. 2. Whether then any persons who want this efficacious operation of the Spirit of God, are or can be bound to believe the Scripture to



be *God's Word*? If they are *bound*, the *duty* must be *propounded* in such a way as may be *sufficient* to *convince* them that it is their *duty*; but if all the *evidence* of the *truth* of the *Scripture* lie on this *testimony* of the *Spirit*, then such as *want* this, can have none at all. But if, lastly, by this *self-evidence* be meant such an *impress* of *God's authority* on the *Scriptures*, that any who consider them as they ought, cannot but *discern*; I still further *enquire*, whether this *impress* lies in the *positive assertions* in *Scripture* that they are from *God*, and that cannot be unless it be made appear to be *impossible* that any *writing* should *pretend* to be from *God* when it is not; or else in the *written Books of Scripture*, and then let it be made appear that any one merely by the *evidence* of the *writings* themselves without any further *arguments* can pronounce the *Proverbs* to be the *Word of God*, and not the *Book of Wisdom*; and *Ecclesiastes* to be *Divinely inspired*, and not *Ecclesiastical*: or else the *self-evidence* must be in the *excellency* of the *matters* which are *revealed* in *Scripture*; but this still falls very short of *resolving* wholly the *question* whether the *Scripture* be the *Word of God*? for the utmost that this can reach to is, that the *things* contained in *Scripture* are of so *high* and *excellent* a *nature*, that we cannot conceive that any *other* should be the *author* of them but *God* himself; all which being granted, I am as far to seek as ever what *grounds* I have to *believe* that those particular *writings* which we call the *Scripture* are the *Word of God*, or that *God* did immediately *imploy* such and such *persons* to *write* such and such *books*; for I may believe the *substance* of the *doctrine* to be of *God*, and yet not believe the *books* wherein it is contained, to be a *divine* and *infallible testimony*; as is evident in the many excellent *devotional Books* which are in the *world*.

But yet further, if the only *ground* on which we are to *believe* a *doctrine* *Divine* be the *self-evidencing light*, and *power* of it, then I suppose there was the same *ground* of *believing* a *Divine Testimony* when the *doctrine* was declared without *writing*, by the first *Preachers* of it. So that by this method of *proceeding*, the *ground* of *believing* *Christ* to be sent as the *Messias* sent from *God*, must be *wholly* and *solely* *resolved* into this, that there *was* so much *self-evidence* in this *proposition* uttered by *Christ*, *I am the light of the world*, that all the

*Jews*,

Jews had been bound to have believed him sent from God, (for light manifests its self,) although our Saviour had never done any one miracle, to make it appear that he came from God. And we cannot but charge our Saviour on this account with being at a very unnecessary expence upon the world in doing so many miracles, when the bare naked affirmation that he was the Messiah, had been sufficient to have convinced the whole world. But is it conceivable then upon what account our Saviour should lay so much force on the miracles done by himself in order to the proving his Testimony to be Divine, that he saith himself, *that he had a greater witness than that of John, (who yet doubtless had self-evidencing light going along with his Doctrine too,) for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me.* Can any thing be more plain, or have greater self-evidence in it, than that our Saviour in these words doth lay the evidence of his Divine Testimony upon the miracles which he wrought, which on that account he so often appeals to, on this very Reason, *because they bear witness of him; and if they would not believe him on his own Testimony, yet they ought to believe him for his work's sake?* Doth all this now amount only to a removing of prejudices from the Person of Christ? which yet according to the tenour of the objection we are considering of, it is impossible the power of miracles should do, if these miracles may be so far done or counterfeited by false Christs, that we can have no certain evidence to distinguish the one from the other.

Señ. 3.

Orig. lib. 2. c.  
Cels.

Which the objection pretends; and was the great thing wherein Celsus the Epicurean triumphed so much, that Christ should fore-tell that others should come and do miracles which they must not hearken to, and thence would infer as from Christ's own confession that miracles have in them *ἔδεν θεῖον*, nothing divine but what may be done by wicked men: *πῶς ἐν ἑτέρῳ ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτῶν ἔργων ἢ μὲν θεῶν, τὰς δὲ πόντους ἡγείδαι;* Is it not a wretched thing, saith he, that from the same works one should be accounted a God, and others Deceivers? Whereby those who would invalidate the Argument from miracles, may take notice how finely they fall in with one of the most bitter enemies of Christian Religion, and make use of the same arguments which he did; and therefore Origen's reply to him, will reach them



them too. For, saith he, *our Saviour in those words of his doth not bid men beware in general of such as did miracles, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῶ πῶς ἀναρροῦσιν ἐαυτοὺς ὅτι καὶ χεῖρὸν τῷ θεῷ, καὶ παρομοῖς διὰ πῶν φαντασῶν πρὸς ἐαυτοὺς ἐπιφέρειν τὰς ἰσχυρὰς μαθητείας* but bids them beware of that when men gave themselves out to be the true Christ the Son of God, and endeavour to draw Christ's Disciples from him, by some mere appearances instead of miracles. Therefore Christ being evidently made appear to be the Son of God, by the powerfull and uncontrouled Miracles which he wrought, what pretence of Reason could there be to hearken to any who gave themselves out to be Christs, merely from some strange wonders which they wrought? And from hence, as he further observes, may be justly inferred contrary to what Celsus imagined, that there was certainly an evidence of Divine Power in miracles, when these false Christs gave themselves out to be Christs merely from the supposal that they had this power of doing miracles. And so it is evident in all the false Christs which have appeared, they have made this their great pretence that they did many signs and wonders; which God might justly permit them to do, to punish the great infidelity of the Jews who would not believe in Christ notwithstanding those frequent and apparent miracles which he did, which did infinitely transcend those of any such pretenders. Such among the Jews were Jonathas, who after the destruction of Jerusalem, as Josephus tells us, drew many of the people into the Wilderness of Cyrene, οὐσία καὶ παρομοῖα δείξεν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις, promising to shew them many prodigies and strange appearances. Not long after in the times of Adrian appeared that famous blazing-star Barchochebas, who not only portended but brought so much mischief upon the Jews; his pretence was that he vomited flames; and so he did, such as consumed himself and his followers: after him many other Impostors arose in Egypt, Cyprus, and Crete, who all went upon the same pretence of doing Miracles. In latter times the famous Impostor was David el-David, whose story is thus briefly reported by David Ganz. David el-David pretended to be the true <sup>Tzemach Da-</sup> Messias and rebelled against the King of Persia, and did many <sup>vid n. 895.</sup> signs and prodigies before the Jews and the King of Persia: at last his head was cut off, and the Jews fined an hundred talents of Gold; in the Epistle of Rambam or R. Moses Maimon. It is

V. ep. Maimon.  
in not. Vorstii  
ad Tzem. Dav.

is said, that the King of Persia desired of him a sign, and he told him that he should cut off his head and he would rise again ; ( which he cunningly desired to avoid being tormented, ) which the King was resolved to try, and accordingly executed him ; but I suppose his resurrection and Mahomet's will be both in a day, although Maimonides tells us, some of the Jews are yet such fools as to expect his Resurrection. Several other Impostors Maimonides mentions in his *Epistle de Australi regione*. One who pretended to be the *Messias* because he cured himself of the *Leprosie* in a night ; several others he mentions in *Spain, France*, and other Parts, and the issue of them all was only a further aggravation of the miseries and captivities of the poor Jews, who were so credulous in following Impostors, and yet such strange Infidels where there were plain and undoubted miracles to persuade them to believe in our blessed Saviour as the true *Messias*. We freely grant then that many pretended miracles may be done in the world, to deceive men with ; but doth it hence follow that either there are no true miracles done in the world, or that there are no certain rules to distinguish the one from the other ? But as Origen yet further replies to Celsus, as a wolf doth very much resemble a Dog, yet they are not of the same kind ; nor a turtle Dove and a Pigeon ; so that which is produced by a Divine power is not of the same Nature with that which is produced by Magick ; but as he argues, Is it possible that there should be only deceits in the world and magical operations ? and can there be no true miracles at all wrought ? Is humane nature only capable of Impostures, or can none work miracles but Devils ? where there is a worse, there may be a better ; and so from the Impostures and Counterfeits, we may infer that there are true miracles, wrought by a Divine power ; otherwise it were all one as to say, there are Counterfeits, but no Jewels ; or there are Sophisms and Paralogisms, but no legitimate demonstrations ; if then there be such deceits, there are true miracles too ; all the business is βεβαιωσιν αὐτῶν τὰς ἐπαγγελουμένας τὰς δυνάμεις ἐξετάζειν, strictly and severely to examine the pretenders to them, and that from the life and manners of those that do them, and from the effects and consequents of them, whether they do good or hurt in the world, whether they correct men's manners, or bring men to goodness, holiness, and truth, and on this account we are neither

to



to reject all miracles, nor imbrace all pretences, but carefully and prudently examine the rational evidences whereby those which are true and divine, may be known from such as are counterfeit and diabolical.

And this now leads us to the main subject of this Chapter, viz. What rules we have to proceed by, in judging miracles to be true or false; which may be these following.

Sect. 4.

True Divine Miracles are wrought in confirmation of some Divine Testimony. Because we have manifested by all the precedent discourse, that the intention of miracles is to seal some Divine Revelation. Therefore if God should work miracles when no Divine Testimony is to be confirmed, God would set the broad Seal of Heaven to a blank. If it be said no, because it will witness to us now the truth of that Testimony which was delivered so many ages since. I answer, 1. The truth of that Testimony was sufficiently sealed at the time of the delivery of it, and is conveyed down in a certain way to us. Is it not sufficient that the Charter of a Corporation had the Prince's broad Seal in the time of the giving of it, but that every succession of men in that Corporation must have a new broad Seal, or else they ought to question their Patent? What ground can there be for that, when the original Seal and Patent is preserved, and is certainly conveyed down from age to age? So I say it is as to us, God's Grand Charter of Grace and Mercy to the world through Jesus Christ, was sealed by Divine miracles, at the delivery of it to the world; the original Patent, viz. the Scriptures wherein the Charter is contained, is conveyed in a most certain manner to us; to this Patent the Seal is annexed, and in it are contained those undoubted miracles which were wrought in confirmation of it, so that a new sealing of this Patent is wholly needless, unless we had some cause of suspicion, that the Original Patent it self were lost, or the first sealing was not true. If the latter, then Christian Religion is not true, if the Miracles wrought for confirmation of it were false, because the truth of it depends so much on the Verity and Divinity of the Miracles which were then wrought. If the first be suspected, viz. the certain conveyance of the Patent, viz. the Scriptures, some certain grounds of such a suspicion must be discovered in a matter of so great moment, especially when the great and many Societies of the

I.

*Christian World* do all *consent* unanimously in the contrary. Nay it is impossible that any *rational man* can *conceive* that the *Patent* which we now rely upon, is *suppositions* or *corrupted* in any of those *things* which are of *concernment* to the *Christian World*; and that on these *accounts*.

1. *From the watchfulness of Divine Providence for the good of mankind.* Can we conceive that there is a *God* who rules and takes care of the *world*, and who to manifest his signal *Love* to *mankind*, should not only *grant* a *Patent* of *Mercy* to the *world*, by his *Son Christ*, and then sealed it by *Divine Miracles*, and in order to the certain conveyance of it to the *world*, caused it by *persons* imployed by *himself*, to be recorded in a *language* fittest for its *dispersing* up and down the *world*, (all which I here suppose :) Can we I say *conceive* that this *God* should so far have *cast off* his care of the *world* and the good of *mankind*, which was the original ground of the *Grant* it self, as to suffer any *wicked men* or *malignant spirits* to *corrupt* or *alter* any of those *Terms* in it, on which men's *eternal salvation* depends; much less wholly to *suppress* and *destroy* it, and to send forth one that is *counterfeit* and *supposititious* instead of it, and which should not be *discovered* by the *Christians* of that age wherein that *corrupt Copy* was set forth, nor by any of the most *learned* and *inquisitive Christians* ever since. They who can give any the least *entertainment* to so *wild*, *absurd* and *irrational* an *imagination*, are so far from *reason*, that they are in good *disposition* to *Atheism*; and next to the *suspecting* the *Scriptures* to be *corrupted*, they may *rationally suspect* there is no such *thing* as a *God* and *providence* in the *world*; or that the *world* is governed by a *spirit* most *malignant* and *envious* of the good of *mankind*. Which is a suspicion only becoming those *Heathens* (among whom it was very frequent) who worshipped the *Devils* instead of *God*.

2. *Because of the general dispersion of Copies in the world upon the first publishing of them.* We cannot otherwise conceive, but that records containing so *weighty* and *important things*, would be transcribed by all those *Churches* which believed the *truth* of the *things* contained in them. We see how far *curiosity* will carry men as to the care of *transcribing* ancient *MSS.* of old *Authors*, which contain only some *history* of *things* past that are of no great *concernment* to us :

Can.



Can we then imagine those who ventured *estates* and *lives* upon the *truth* of the *things* revealed in *Scripture*, would not be very carefull to preserve the authentick *instrument* whereby they are revealed in a certain way to the whole world? And besides this, for a long time the *originals* themselves of the *Apostolical* writings were preserved in the *Church*; which makes *Tertullian* in his time appeal to them. *Age jam qui vo-* *De præscript.*  
*les curiositatem melius exercere in negotio salutis tuæ; percurre* *adv. hæres.*  
*Ecclesias Apostolicas, apud quas ipsæ adhuc cathedræ Apostolorum* *cap 36.*  
*suis locis præsentantur, apud quas ipsæ authenticæ eorum literæ*  
*recitantur, sonantes vocem, & repræsentantes faciem uniuscujus-*  
*que.* Now how was it possible that in that time the *Scriptures* could be corrupted, when in some of the *Churches* the original writings of the *Apostles* were preserved in a continual succession of persons from the *Apostles* themselves, and from these *originals* so many *Copies* were transcribed, as were conveyed almost all the world over, through the large spread of the *Christian Churches* at that time? and therefore it is impossible to conceive that a *Copy* should be corrupted in one *Church*, when it would so speedily be discovered by another; especially considering these three circumstances. 1. The innumerable multitude of *Copies* which would speedily be taken, both considering the moment of the thing, and the easiness of doing it; God, probably for that very end, not loading the world with *Pandects* and *Codes* of his *Laws*, but contriving the whole instruments of man's salvation in so narrow a compass, that it might be easily preserved and transcribed by such who were passionate admirers of the *Scriptures*. 2. The great numbers of learned and inquisitive men who soon sprung up in the *Christian Church*; whose great care was to explain and vindicate the sacred *Scriptures*; can we then think that all these watchmen should be asleep together when the evil one came to sow his *Tares*, which it is most unreasonable to imagine, when in the writings of all these learned men, which were very many and voluminous, so much of the *Scripture* was inserted, that had there been corruption in the *Copies* themselves, yet comparing them with those writings, the corruptions would be soon discovered? 3. The great veneration which all *Christians* had of the *Scripture*, that they placed the hopes of their eternal happiness, upon the truth of the things contained in

the *Scriptures* : Can we then *think* these would suffer any *material* alteration to creep into these records without their *observing* and *discovering* it ? Can we now think when all *persons* are so exceeding *carefull* of their *Deeds*, and the *Records* whereon their *estates* depend, that the *Christians* who valued not this *world* in comparison of that to *come*, should suffer the *Magna Charta* of that to be *lost*, *corrupted*, or *imbezzelled* away ? Especially considering what *care* and *industry* was used by many *Primitive Christians* to compare *Copies* together, as is evident in *Pantaenus*, who brought the *Hebrew Copy* of *Matthew* out of the *Indies* to *Alexandria*, as *Eusebius* tells us: in *Pamphilus* and the *Library* he erected at *Cæsarea*, but especially in *Origen's* admirable *Hexapla*, which were mainly intended for this end.

3. It is impossible to conceive a *corruption* of the *Copy* of the *Scriptures*, because of the *great differences* which were all along the several *ages* of the *Church*, between those who acknowledged the *Scriptures* to be *Divine*. So that if one party of them had *foisted* in, or *taken* out any thing, another party was ready to take *notice* of it, and would be *sure* to tell the *world* of it. And this might be one great *reason*, why *God* in his wise *providence* might permit such an *increase* of *heresies* in the *Infancy* of the *Church*, viz. that thereby *Christians* might be forced to *stand* upon their *guard*, and to have a special *eye* to the *Scriptures*, which were always the great *eye-sores* of *Hereticks*. And from this great *wariness* of the *Church* it was that some of the *Epistles* were so long *abroad* before they found general *entertainment* in all the *Churches* of *Christ*, because in those *Epistles* which were *doubted* for some time, there were some *passages* which seemed to *favour* some of the *heresies* then *abroad* ; but when upon severe *enquiry* they are found to be what they *pretended*, they were received in all the *Christian Churches*.

4. Because of the *agreement* between the *Old Testament* and the *New* : the *Prophecies* of the *Old Testament* appear with their full *accomplishment* in the *New* which we have ; so that it is *impossible* to *think* the *New* should be *corrupted* unless the *Old* were too, which is most *unreasonable* to imagine, when the *Jews*, who have been the great *conservators* of the *Old Testament*, have been all along the most *inveterate enemies* of the



the *Christians* : So that we cannot at all conceive it possible that any material *corruptions* or *alterations* should creep into the *Scriptures*, much less that the true Copy should be lost, and a new one forged.

Supposing then that we have the same *authentick records* preserved and handed down to us by the care of all *Christian Churches*, which were written in the *first ages* of the *Church of Christ* : what necessity can we imagine that God should work new miracles to confirm that *Doctrine* which is conveyed down in a certain *uninterrupted way* to us, as being sealed by miracles undoubtedly *divine* in the first promulgation and penning of it : And this is the first reason why the truth of the *Scriptures* need not now be sealed by new miracles. 2. Another, may be because God in the *Scripture* hath appointed other things to continue in his Church to be as seals to his people of the truth of the things contained in *Scriptures*. Such are outwardly, the *Sacraments* of the Gospel, *Baptism*, and the *Lord's Supper*, which are set apart to be as seals to confirm the truth of the *Covenant* on God's part towards us in reference to the great promises contained in it, in reference to pardon of sin, and the ground of our acceptance with God by *Jesus Christ* : and inwardly God hath promised his *Spirit* to be as a witness within them, that by its working and strengthening grace in the hearts of *Believers*, it may confirm to them the truth of the records of *Scripture* when they find the counter-part of them written in their hearts by the finger of the *Spirit of God*. It cannot then be with any reason at all supposed, that when a *Divine Testimony* is already confirmed by miracles undoubtedly *Divine*, that new miracles should be wrought in the Church to assure us of the truth of it. So *Chrysostom* fully expresseth himself concerning miracles, speaking of the first ages of the *Christian Church* : *ὅτι καὶ τότε χριστιανὸς ἐγένετο, καὶ νῦν χριστιανὸς ἐγένετο, νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγράφει καὶ ἡ τότε σημείων τῶν πιστῶν ὧν λέγουσιν παρὰ χεῖρας. Miracles were very usefull then, and not at all usefull now ; for now we manifest the truth of what we speak from the sacred Scriptures, and the miracles wrought in confirmation of them. Which that excellent Authour there fully manifests in a discourse on this subject, why miracles were necessary in the beginning of the Christian Church, and are not now. To the same purpose St. Austin speaks where he discourseth of the*

Sect. 5.

*Chrysost. in 1 Cor. 2. hom. 6. p. 276. To. 3. ed. Etou.*

*De ver. Relig. truth cap. 25.*

truth of Religion *Accepimus majores nostros visibilia miracula secutos esse ; per quos id actum est ut necessaria non essent posteris ;* because the world believed by the miracles which were wrought at the first preaching of the Gospel, therefore miracles are no longer necessary. For we cannot conceive how the world should be at first induced to believe without manifest and uncontroled miracles. For as Chrysostom speaks, *ἐν σημείων χρεὶς ἔπεισαν, πολλῷ μᾶλλον τὸ θαῦμα φαίνεται.* It was the greatest miracle of all, if the world should believe without miracles. Which the Poet Dantes hath well expressed in the twenty-fourth Canto of *Paradise*. For when the *Apostle* is there brought in, asking the Poet upon what account he took the *Scriptures* of the *Old and New Testament* to be the word of God ; his answer is,

*Probatio quæ verum hoc mihi recludit,  
Sunt opera, quæ secuta sunt, ad quæ Natura  
Non candefecit ferrum unquam aut percussit incudem.*

i. e. the evidence of that is the Divine power of miracles which was in those who delivered these things to the world. And when the *Apostle* catechiseth him further, how he knew those miracles were such as they pretend to be, viz. that they were true and divine ; his answer is,

*Si orbis terræ sese convertit ad Christianismum,  
Inquirebam ego, sine miraculis : hoc unum  
Est tale, ut reliqua non sint ejus centesima pars.*

i. e. If the world should be converted to the Christian faith without miracles, this would be so great a miracle, that others were not to be compared with it. I conclude this then, with that known saying of St. Austin ; *Quisquis adhuc prodigia, ut credat, inquiret, magnum est ipse prodigium qui mundo credente non credit.* He that seeks for miracles still to induce him to faith, when the world is converted to the Christian faith, he needs not seek for prodigies abroad ; he wants only a looking-glass to discover one. For as he goes on, *Unde temporibus eruditiss & omne quod fieri non potest respicientibus, sine ulis miraculis nimium mirabiliter incredibilia credidit mundis ?* whence came it to pass that in so learned and wary an age as that was which the *Apostles* preached



preached in, the world without miracles should be brought to believe things so strangely incredible as those were which Christ and his Apostles preached? So that by this it appears that the intention of miracles was to confirm a Divine Testimony to the world, and to make that appear credible which otherwise would have seemed incredible; but to what end now, when this Divine Testimony is believed in the world, should miracles be continued among those who believe the Doctrine to be Divine, the miracles wrought for the confirmation of it to have been true, and the Scriptures which contain both, to be the undoubted Word of God? To what purpose then the huge outcry of miracles in the Roman Church is, is hard to conceive, unless it be to make it appear how ambitious that Church is of being called by the name of him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. For had they received the Love of the Truth of the Gospel, they would have believed it on the account of those miracles and signs and wonders which were wrought for the confirmation of it, by Christ and his Apostles; and not have gone about by their jugglings and impostures instead of bringing me to believe the Gospel, to make them question the truth of the first miracles when they see so many counterfeits; had we not great assurance the Apostles were men of other designs and interests than Popish Priests are, and that there is not now any such necessity of miracles, as there was then when a Divine Testimony revealing the truth of Christian Religion was confirmed by them.

2 Thes. 2. 9, 10.

Those miracles cannot be Divine, which are done now for the confirmation of any thing contrary to that Divine Testimony, which is confirmed by uncontroled Divine Miracles. The case is not the same now, which was before the coming of Christ; for then though the Law of Moses was confirmed by miracles; yet though the doctrine of Christ did null the obligation of that Law, the miracles of Christ were to be looked on as Divine, because God did not intend the Ceremonial Law to be perpetual; and there were many Prophecies which could not have their accomplishment but under a new state: But now under the Gospel, God hath declared this to be the last revelation of his

Seet. 6.

2.

Deut. 13. 1,  
2, 3.

his mind and will to the world by his Son, that now the *Prophecies* of the *Old Testament* are accomplished, and the *Prophecies* of the *New* respect only the *various conditions* of the *Christian Church*, without any the least *intimation* of any further *revocation* of God's mind and will to the world: So that now the *Scriptures* are our *adquate rule of faith*, and that according to which we are to judge all *pretenders to inspiration or miracles*. And according to this rule we are to proceed in any thing which is *propounded* to us to believe by any persons, upon any *pretences* whatsoever. Under the *Law* after the *establishment* of the *Law* its self by the *miracles of Moses*, the rule of judging all *pretenders to miracles*, was by the *worship of the true God*. If there arise among you a *Prophet*, or a *dreamer of dreams*, and giveth thee a sign, or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake to thee, saying, Let us go after other Gods (which thou hast not known) and let us serve them: thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that *Prophet*, or that *dreamer of dreams*: for the Lord your God proveth you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul. Whereby it is plain, that after the true doctrine is confirmed by *Divine miracles*, God may give the Devil or false *Prophets* power to work, if not real miracles, yet such as men cannot judge by the things themselves whether they be real or no; and this God may do for the *tryal* of men's faith, whether they will forsake the true doctrine confirmed by greater miracles for the sake of such doctrines which are contrary thereto, and are confirmed by false *Prophets*, by signs and wonders. Now in this case our rule of *tryal* must not be so much the wonders considered in themselves whether real or no, as the comparing them with the miracles which were wrought in confirmation of that doctrine, which is contrary to this, which these wonders tend to the proving of. Therefore God's people under the *Law* were to examine the scope and drift of the miracles; if they were intended to bring them to *Idolatry*, what-ever they were, they were not to hearken to those who did them. So now under the *Gospel*, as the worship of the true God was then the standard whereby to judge of miracles by the *Law of Moses*, so the worship of the true God through *Jesus Christ*, and by the doctrine revealed by him, is the standard whereby we ought to judge of all pretenders to



to work miracles. So that let the miracles be what they will, if they contradict that doctrine which Christ revealed to the world, we are to look upon them as only tryals of our faith in Christ, to see whether we love him with our whole hearts or no. And therefore I think it needless to examine all the particulars of Lipsius his relations of miracles wrought by his *Divæ Virgo Hallensis* and *Asprecollis*; for if I see, that their intention and scope is to set up the worship of *Dæmons*, or a middle sort of Deities between God and us, which the Scripture is ignorant of, on that very account I am bound to reject them all. Although I think it very possible to find out the difference between true miracles, and them, in the manner and circumstances of their operation; but this, as it is of more curiosity, so of less necessity; for if the doctrine of the Scriptures was confirmed by miracles infinitely above these. I am bound to adhere to that, and not to believe any other doctrine, though an Angel from Heaven should preach it, much less, although some Popish Priests may boast much of miracles to confirm a doctrine opposite to the Gospel: which I know not how far God may in judgment give those images power to work, or others faith to believe, because they would not receive the truth in the love of it: and these are now those *Ægla Jædææ*, lying wonders which the Scripture fore-warns <sup>2 Thes. 2. 9.</sup> us that we should not believe, viz. such as lead men to the belief of lyes, or of doctrines, contrary to that of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Where miracles are true and divine, there the effects which follow them upon the minds of those who believe them, are true and divine, i. e. the effect of believing of them, is the drawing of men from sin unto God. This the Primitive Christians insisted much upon, as an undoubted evidence that the miracles of Christ were wrought by a Divine Power, because the effect which followed them, was the work of conversion of souls from sin and Idols to God and Christ, and all true piety and virtue. As the effect of the miracles of Moses was the drawing a people off from Superstition and Idolatry to the worship of the true God; so the effect which followed the belief of the miracles of Christ in the world was the purging men's souls from all sin and wickedness to make them new creatures, and to live in all exactness and holiness of conversation. And thereby Ori-

Sect. 7.

3.

*Lib. 2. c. Gelf.* *gen* discovers the great difference between the miracles of *Christ* and *Antichrist*, that the intent of all *Antichrist's* wonders was to bring men *eis antitimon tē adikia*, to the deceivableness of unrighteousness whereby to destroy them; but the intent of the miracles of *Christ* was *ἐν πίστιν ἀλλὰ σωτηρίαν Ψυχῶν*, not the deceiving but the saving of souls; *τίς γὰρ ἡ κρείσσονα βίον καὶ σωτηρίαν τὰ ἢ κακίας δογματισμοὶ ἐστὶ τὸ ἐλαττον, εὐλόγως φησιν ἀπὸ ἀπίστης ἀνίσταται*; who can with any probability say that reformation of life and daily progress from evil to good should be the effect of mere deceit? And therefore he saith, *Christ* told his Disciples that they should do greater works than he had done; because by their Preaching and Miracles the eyes of blind souls are opened, and the ears of such as were deaf to all goodness are opened so far as to hearken to the Precepts and Promises of the Gospel: and the feet of those who were lame in their inward man, are so healed as to delight to run in the ways of God's Commandments. Now is it possible that these should be the effects of any evil spirit? But on the contrary we see the effects of all Impostors, and pretended miracles wrought by Diabolical power was to bring men off from God to sin, and to dissolve that strict obligation to duty which was laid upon men by the Gospel of *Christ*. Thus it was in that early age of the Apostles, *Simon Magus*, who far outwent *Apollonius Tyaneus* or any other Heathen in his pretended miracles, according to the report which is given of him by the Primitive Christians; but we see the intent of his miracles was to raise an admiration of himself, and to bring men off from all holiness of conversation, by asserting among other damnable heresies, that God did not at all regard what men did, but only what they believed: wherein the Gnosticks were his followers. Now when miracles are wrought to be Patrons of sin, we may easily know from whom they come.

*V. Grot. in  
2 Thes. 2. 9.  
in opusc.*

Seet. 8.

4

Those miracles are wrought by a Divine power which tend to the overthrow of the Kingdom of Satan in the world. This is evident from hence, because all such things as are out of man's power to effect, must either be done by a power Divine or Diabolical: For as our Saviour argues, Every Kingdom divided against its self is brought to desolation, and every City or House divided against its self cannot stand; and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself, how shall then his Kingdom stand? Now *Christ* by his miracles did not only dispossess

Satan



*Satan* out of men's *bodies*, but out of his *Temples* too, as hath been shewn already. And besides the *Doctrine* of *Christ* which was confirmed by those *miracles*, was in every thing directly contrary to the *Devil's design*, in the *World*. For, 1. The *Devil's design* was to *conceal himself* among those who worshipped him; the *design* of the *Gospel* was to *discover him* whom the *Gentiles* worshipped, to be an *evil* and *malignant spirit*, that *designed* nothing but their *ruine*. Now it appears in the *whole history* of *Gentilism*, the *grand mystery* of *State* which the *Devil* used among the *Heathens* was to make himself to be *taken* and *worshipped* for *God*, and to make them *believe* that their *Dæmons* were very *good* and *benign spirits*; which made the *Platonists* and other *Philosophers* so much *incensed* against the *Primitive Christians*, when they declared their *Dæmons* to be nothing else but *infernal* and *wicked spirits* which sought the *destruction* of *souls*.

2. The *Devil's great design* was to *draw men* to the *practice* of the *greatest wickedness* under a *pretence* of *Religion*; as is very *observable* in all the *Heathen mysteries*, which the more *recondite* and *hidden* they were, the *greater wickedness* lay at the *bottom* of them, and so were to *purpose* *mysteries* of *iniquity*; but now the *design* of the *Gospel* was to *promote* the *greatest purity* both of *heart* and *life*; There being in no other *Religion* in the *world* either such *incomparable Precepts* of *holiness*, or such *incouraging Promises* to the *practice* of it (from *eternal life* hereafter as the *reward*, and the *assistance* of *God's spirit* to *help* men here) or such *prevailing motives* to *persuade* men to it, from the *love* of *God* in *Christ* to the *World*, the *undertakings* of *Christ* for us in his *death* and *sufferings*, the *excellent pattern* we have to *follow* in our *Saviour's own example*; now these *things* make it plain that the *design* of *Christ* and the *Devil* are *diametrically opposite* to each other. 3. The *design* of the *Devil* is to *set God* and *mankind* at the *greatest distance* from each other; the *design* of *Christ* in the *Gospel* is to *bring them nearer together*. The *Devil* first *tempts* to *sin*, and then for *sin*; he makes men *presume* to *sin*, and to *despair* because they have *sinned*. *Christ* first *keeps* men from *sin*, by his *Precepts* and *Threatnings*, and then supposing *sin*, *incourageth* them to *repent* with *hopes* of *pardon* procured by *himself* for all truly *penitent* and *believing sinners*. Thus in every thing

the design of Christ and the Devil are contrary, which makes it evident that the miracles wrought in confirmation of the doctrine of Christ could be from no evil spirit, and therefore must be from a truly Divine Power.

Sect. 9.

5.

Arnob. c. gentes  
l. i. pag. 25, 26,  
c. 6.

True and Divine Miracles may be known and distinguished from false and diabolical, from the circumstances, or the manner of their operation. There were some peculiar signatures on the miracles of Christ which are not to be found in any wrought by a power less than Divine. Which Arnobius well expresseth in these words to the Heathens. *Potestis aliquem nobis designare, monstrare ex omnibus illis Magis qui unquam fuere per secula, consimile aliquid Christo millesima ex parte qui fecerit? qui sine ulla vi carminum, sine herbarum aut graminum succis, sine ulla aliqua observatione sollicita sacrorum, libaminum, temporum? — Atqui constitit Christum sine ullis adminiculis rerum, sine ullius ritus observatione, vel lege, omnia illa quæ fecit, nominis sui possibilitate fecisse, & quod proprium, consentaneum, Deo dignum fuerat vero, nihil nocens aut noxium, sed opiferum, sed salutare, sed auxiliaribus plenum bonis potestatis munificæ liberalitate donasse?* He challengeth the Heathens to produce any one of all their Magicians who did the thousandth part of what our Saviour did: who made use of none of their Magical rites and observations in what-ever he did; and what-ever he did was merely by his own power, and was withall most becoming God; and most beneficial to the world. And thence he proceeds to answer the Heathens about the miracles wrought by their Gods, which fell short of those of Christ in three main particulars, the manner of their working, and the number of them, and the quality of the things done.

1. The manner of their working; What they did was with a great deal of pomp and ceremony; what Christ did was with a word speaking, and sometimes without it by the touch of his garment: *Non inquirō, non exigo*, saith he, *quis Deus, aut quo tempore, cui fuerit auxiliatus, aut quem fractum restituerit sanitati; illud solum audire desidero, an sine ullius adjunctione materiæ, i. e. medicaminis alicujus ad tactum morbos jusserit ab hominibus evolare, imperaverit, fecerit, & emori valetudinum causam, & debiliū corpora ad suas remeare naturas.* Omitting all other circumstances, name me, saith he, but which of your Gods



Gods ever cured a disease without any adjoynd matter, some prescriptions or other; or which of them ever commanded diseases out of bodies by their mere touch, and quite removed the cause of the distempers. *Æsculapius*, he says, cured diseases, but in the way that ordinary physicians do, by prescribing something, or other, to be done by the patients. *Nulla autem virtus est medicaminibus amovere quæ noceant; beneficia ista rerum, non sunt curantium potestates.* To cure diseases by prescriptions argues no power at all in the prescriber, but vertue in the medicine.

2. In the number of the persons cured: they were very few which were cured in the Heathen Temples; *Christ* cured whole multitudes, and that not in the revestries of the Temples where fraud and imposture might be easily suspected, but in the presence of the people who brought to him all manner of persons sick of all sorts of diseases, which were cured by him; and these so numerous, that the *Evangelist* who records many of *Christ's* miracles which had been omitted by the others, yet tells us at last, the miracles of *Christ* were so many, that the whole world would not contain them. But now *Arnobius* tells *Joh. 21. 25.* the Heathens, *Quid prodest ostendere unum aut alterum fortasse curatos, cum tot millibus subvenerit nemo, & plena sint omnia miserorum infelicitumque delubra?* What matter is it to shew one or two cured, when thousands lie continually in the Temples perishing for want of cure? yea such as did *Æsculapium* ipsum precibus fatigare, & invitare miserrimis votis, that could not beg a cure of *Æsculapius* with all their earnestness and importunity.

3. In the quality of the diseases cured; the cures among the Heathens were some slight things in comparison of those performed by *Christ*; the most acute, the most Chronical, the most malignant of diseases, cured by a touch, a word, a thought. *Gul. Ader. de morbis Evangel.* A learned Physician hath undertaken to make it evident from the circumstances of the story, and from the received principles among the most authentick Physicians, that the diseases cured by our Saviour were all incurable by the rules of Physick; if so, the greater the power of our Saviour, who cured them with so much facility as he did. And he not only cured all diseases himself, but gave a power to others, who were not at all versed in matters of art and subtilty, that they should do

do miracles likewise *sine fucis & adminiculis*, without any fraud or assistance : *quid dicitis O mentes incredulae, difficiles, durae ! alicuique mortalium Jupiter ille Capitolinus hujusmodi potestatem dedit ?* when did ever the great Jupiter Capitolinus give a power of working miracles to any ? I do not say, saith he, of raising the dead, or curing the blind, or healing the lame, sed ut *pustulam, reduriam, populam, aut vocis Imperio aut manus confectione comprimeret* : but to cure a wart, a pimple, any the most trivial thing, with a word speaking, or the touch of the hand. Upon this Arnobius challengeth the most famous of all the Heathen Magicians, Zoroastres, Armenius, Pamphilus, Apollonius, Damigero, Dardanus, Velus, Julianus, and Bæbulus, or any other renowned Magician to give power to any one to make the dumb to speak, the deaf to hear, the blind to see, or bring life into a dead body. Or if this be too hard, with all their Magical Rites and Incantations, but to do that, *quod à rusticis Christianis jussionibus facilitatum est nudis*, which ordinary Christians do by their mere words : So great a difference was there between the highest that could be done by Magick, and the least that was done by the Name and Power of Christ.

Sect. 10

6.

Where Miracles are truly Divine, God makes it evident to all Impartial judgments that the things done exceed all created power. For which purpose we are to observe that though Impostures and Delusions may go far, the Power of Magicians further when God permits them ; yet when God works Miracles to confirm a Divine Testimony, he makes it evident that his Power doth infinitely exceed them all. This is most conspicuous, in the case of Moses and our blessed Saviour. First Moses, he began to do some miracles in the presence of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, turning his Rod into a Serpent ; but we do not find Pharaoh at all amazed at it, but sends presently for the Magicians to do the same, who did it ( whether really or only in appearance, is not material to our purpose,) but Aaron's rod swallowed up theirs. The next time the waters are turned into blood by Moses, the Magicians they do so too. After this, Moses brings up Frogs upon the Land, so do the Magicians. So that here now is a plain and open contest in the presence of Pharaoh and his people, between Moses and the Magicians, and they try for victory over each other ; so that

Exod. 7. 10, 12.

Exod. 8. 19, 22.

8. 6, 7.



that if *Moses* do no more than they, they would look upon him but as a *Magician*; but if *Moses* do that which by the acknowledgment of these *Magicians* themselves could be only by *Divine Power*, then it is demonstrably evident that his *Power* was as far above the power of *Magick* as *God* is above the *Devil*. Accordingly we find it in the very next miracle in turning the dust into *Ciniphes* (which we render) *lice*, the *Magicians* are non-plust, and give out, saying in plain terms, *This is the finger of God*. And what greater acknowledgment can there be of *Divine Power* than the confession of those who seemed to contest with it, and to imitate it as much as possible? After this we find not the *Magicians* offering to contest with *Moses*, and in the plague of *boyls* we particularly read that they could not stand before *Moses*. Thus we see in the case of *Moses* how evident it was that there was a power above all power of *Magick* which did appear in *Moses*. And so likewise in the case of our blessed *Saviour*; for although *Simon Magus*, *Apollonius*, or others, might do some small things, or make some great shew and noise by what they did; yet none of them ever came near the doing things of the same kind which our *Saviour* did, curing the born blind, restoring the dead to life after four days, and so as to live a considerable time after; or in the manner he did them, with a word, a touch, with that frequency and openness before his greatest enemies as well as followers, and in such an uncontrouled manner, that neither *Jews* or *Heathens*, ever questioned the truth of them. And after all these, when he was laid in the grave after his crucifixion, exactly according to his own prediction, he rose again the third day, appeared frequently among his *Disciples* for forty days together. After which, in their presence, he ascended up to Heaven, and soon after, made good his promise to them, by sending his *Holy Spirit* upon them, by which they spake with tongues, wrought miracles, went up and down Preaching the Gospel of *Christ* with great boldness, cheerfulness, and constancy, and after undergoing a great deal of hardship in it, they sealed the truth of all they spake with their blood, laying down their lives to give witness to it. Thus abundantly to the satisfaction of the minds of all good men hath *God* given the highest rational evidence of the truth of the *Doctrine* which he hath revealed to the World. And thus I have

8. 19.

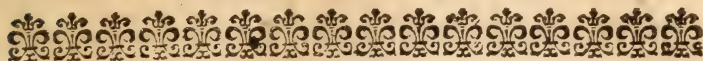
9. 11.

have finished the *second part* of my task, which concerned the *rational evidence* of the *truth of Divine Revelation* from the persons who were employed to deliver *God's mind* to the World : And therein have, I hope, made it evident that both *Moses* and the *Prophets*, our *Saviour* and his *Apostles*, did come with sufficient *rational evidence* to convince the *world* that they were *persons* immediately sent from *God*.

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## BOOK





## B O O K   I I I.

### C H A P. I.

#### Of the Being of God.

*The Principles of all Religion lie in the Being of God and Immortality of the soul: from them the necessity of a particular divine revelation rationally deduced; the method laid down for proving the divine Authority of the Scriptures. Why Moses doth not prove the Being of God, but suppose it. The notion of a Deity very consonant to reason. Of the nature of Idea's, and particularly of the Idea of God. How we can form an Idea of an infinite Being. How far such an Idea argues existence. The great unreasonableness of Atheism demonstrated. Of the Hypotheses of the Aristotelian and Epicurean Atheists. The Atheists pretences examined and refuted. Of the nature of the arguments whereby we prove there is a God. Of universal consent and the evidence of that to prove a Deity and Immortality of souls. Of necessity of existence implied in the notion of God, and how far that proves the Being of God. The order of the world and usefulness of the parts of it, and especially of man's body an argument of a Deity. Some higher principle proved to be in the world than matter and motion. The Nature of the soul, and possibility of its subsisting after death. Strange appearances in Nature not solvable by the power of imagination.*

**H**AVING in the precedent Book largely given a rational account of the grounds of our faith, as to the persons whom God employs to reveal his mind to the world; if we can now make it appear that those sacred records which

*Sect. I.*

Heb. 11. 6.

we embrace as *divinely inspired*, contain in them nothing unworthy of so great a name, or unbecoming persons sent from God to deliver; there will be nothing wanting to justify our Religion in point of reason to be true, and of revelation to be divine. For the Scriptures themselves coming to us in the name of God, we are bound to believe them to be such as they pretend to be, unless we have ground to question the general foundations of all religion as uncertain, or this particular way of religion as not suitable to those general foundations. The foundations of all religion lie in two things; that there is a God who rules the world, and that the souls of men are capable of subsisting after death; for he that comes unto God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek him; so that if these things be not supposed as most agreeable to humane reason, we cannot imagine upon what grounds mankind should embrace any way of religion at all. For if there be not a God whom I am to serve and obey, and if I have not a soul of an immortal nature, there can be no sufficient obligation to religion, nor motive inducing to it: For all obligation to obedience must suppose the existence of such a Being which hath power to command me; and by reason of the promiscuous scatterings of good and evil in this life, the motives engaging men to the practice of religion, must suppose the certainty of a future state. If these things be sure, and the foundations of religion in general thereby firmly established, it will presently follow as a matter most agreeable to reason, that the God whom we are to serve should himself prescribe the way of his own worship; and if the right of donation of that happiness which mens souls are capable of, be alone in himself, that he alone should declare the terms on which it may be expected; For man being a creature endued with a free principle of acting, which he is conscious to himself of, and therefore not being carried to his end by necessity of nature or external violence, without the concurrence of his own reason and choice, we must suppose this happiness to depend upon the performance of some conditions on man's part, whereby he may demonstrate that it is the matter of his free choice, and that he freely quits all other interests that he might obtain the enjoyment of it. Which conditions to be performed, being expressions of man's obedience towards God as his Creator and Governour, and of his gratitude for the tenders of so great a happiness



*pinefs* which is the *free gift* of his *Maker*, we cannot suppose any one to have *power* to *prescribe* these *conditions*, but he that hath *power* likewise to *deprive* the *soul* of her *happiness* upon *nonperformance*, and that must be *God* himself. But in order to man's *understanding* his *duty*, and his *obligation* to *obedience*, it is necessary that these *conditions* must not be *locked up* in the *Cabinet Council* of *Heaven*, but must be so far *declared* and *revealed*, that he may be fully acquainted with those *terms* which his *happiness* depends upon; else his *neglect* of them would be *excusable*, and his *misery* *unavoidable*. Had man indeed remained without offending his *Maker*, he might still have stood in his *favour* upon the general *terms* of *obedience* due from the *creature* to his *Creator*, and to all such particular *precepts* which should bear the *impress* of his *Maker's* will upon them, beside which, the whole *volume* of the *Creation*, without, and his own *reason* within would have been sufficient *directors* to him in the *performance* of his *duty*. But he abusing his *liberty*, and being thereby guilty of *Aposstasie* from *God* (as is evident by a continued propensity to sin, and the strangeness between *God* and the *souls* of men) a particular *revelation* is now become *necessary*, that *mankind* may thereby understand on what *terms* *God* will be pleased again, and by what means they may be restored into his *favour*. And lastly, it not agreeing with the *free* and *communicative* nature of *divine* goodness (which was the first *original* of the world's *Creation*) to suffer all *mankind* to perish in their own *folly*, we must suppose this way for man's *recovery* to be somewhere *prescribed*, and the *revelation* of it to be somewhere *extant* in the world. So that from the general *principles* of the *existence* of *God*, and *immortality* of the *soul*, we have deduced by clear and evident *reason* the *necessity* of some particular *divine* *revelation*, as the *standard* and *measure* of *Religion*. And according to these *principles* we must examine whatever pretends to be of *divine* *revelation*; for it must be *suitable* to that *divine* nature from whom it is supposed to come, and it must be *agreeable* to the *conditions* of the *souls* of men, and therefore that which carries with it the greatest evidence of *divine* *revelation*, is, a *faithfull* representation of the *state* of the *case* between *God* and the *souls* of men, and a *divine* discovery of those *ways* whereby men's *souls* may be fitted for eternal *happiness*. A *divine* *revelation* then must be

*faithfull and true in all its narrations; it must be excellent and becoming God in all its discoveries. And therefore all that can with any reason be desired for proof of the divine authority of the Scriptures, will lie in these three things. First, That the foundations of religion are of undoubted certainty, or that there is a God, and that mens souls are immortal. Secondly, That the Scriptures do most faithfully relate the matters of greatest antiquity therein contained (which do most concern the History of the breach between God and man.) Thirdly, That the Scriptures are the only authentick records of those terms on which happiness may be expected in another world.*

*Sett. 2.* I begin with the first of them, which concerns the existence of God, and immortality of the soul; both which seem to be supposed as general Prolepses in the writings of Moses, and as things so consonant to humane nature, that none to whom his writings should come could be supposed to question them. And therefore he spends no time in the operose proving of either of these, knowing to how little purpose his writings would be to such who denyed these first principles of all religion. But beside this, there may be these accounts given, why these main foundations of all religion are no more insisted on in the first Books of the Scripture, which contain the originals of the world. First, Because these were in the time of the writing of them, believed with an universal consent of mankind. In those more early days of the world, when the tradition of the first ages of it was more fresh and entire, it is scarce imaginable that men should question the Being of a God, when the history of the flood, and the propagation of the world after it by the Sons of Noab, and the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah were so fresh in their memories, as having been done so few Generations before them. And by what remains of any history of other Nations in those elder times men were so far from Atheism, that Polytheism and Idolatry were the common practice of the world, as is most evident in all relations of the ancient Chaldeans, Egyptians, Phœnicians, and other Nations, who all supposed these two principles, as well as those who served the true God. And in all probability, as men are apt to run from one extreme to another, Polytheism was the first occasion of Atheism, and Idolatry of Irreligion. And thence we find the first appearance of Atheists to be in the most blind and superstitious age of Greece, when the obscene Poets



Poets had so debauched the common understandings of the people, as to make them believe such things concerning their Gods, which were so incongruous to humane nature, that all who had any sense of goodness left, could not but loath and abhor such Deities. And therefore we find all the flouts and jeers of the reputed Atheists among them, such as Dionysius, Diagoras, Theodorus, Euhemerus, Messenius and others, were cast upon their venerable Deities, which they so solemnly worshipped, who had been before as Euhemerus plainly told them, poor mortal men, and those not of the best reputation neither : and therefore as the Epicurean in Tully well says, *omnis eorum cultus esset in luctu*, the most suitable devotion for them had been lamenting their death. Now when these common Deities were so much derided by intelligent men, and yet the order of the world seemed to tell them there was really a God, though those were none ; those who had Philosophical wits, such as Democritus and Epicurus set themselves to work to see if they could solve the Phenomena of nature without a Deity ; and therefore asserted the origin of the universe to be only by a fortuitous concurrence of infinite little particles ; but herein they befooled themselves and their greedy followers, who were glad to be rid of those anxieties of mind which the thoughts of a Deity and an immortal soul did cause within them. And although Lucretius in a bravado tells us of his Master, *that when mens minds were sunk under the burden of Religion,*

*De Nat. Deor.*  
*l. I. cap. 38.*

*Humana ante oculos fœdè cum vita jaceret  
In terris oppressa gravi sub religione :  
Primum Graius homo mortales tollere contra  
Est oculos ausus, primusque obistere contra.*

*De rerum Nat.*  
*lib. 1.*

*That Epicurus was the first true Gyant who durst encounter the Gods, and if we believe him, overthrew them in open field ;*

*Quare religio pedibus subjecta vicissim  
Obteritur, nos exæquat victoria cælo.*

Yet Cotta in Tully reports the issue of this battle quite otherwise ; for although the greatest triumph in this victory had been only to become like the beasts that perish ; yet if we believe

lieve Cotta, Epicurus was so far from gaining any of his beloved ease and pleasure by his sentiments, that never was School-boy more afraid of a Rod, nor did any enemy more dread a Conqueror, than Epicurus did the thoughts of a God and death.

De Nat. Deor.  
lib. 1. cap. 86.

Nec quenquam vidi qui magis ea quæ timenda esse negaret, timeret ; mortem dico & Deos. So hard it is for an Epicurean even after he hath prostituted his conscience, to silence it ; but (whatever there be in the air) there is an Elastic power in conscience that will bear its self up notwithstanding the weight that is laid upon it. And yet after all the labours of Epicurus, he knew it was to no purpose to endeavour to root out wholly the belief of a Deity out of the world, because of the unanimous consent of the world in it ; and therefore he admits of it as a necessary Prolepsis or Anticipation of humane nature, quod in omnium animis deorum notionem impressisset ipsa natura, that nature its self had stamped an Idea of God upon the minds of men ; cum enim non instituto aliquo, aut more aut lege sit opinio constituta, maneatque ad unum omnium firma consensio, intelligi necesse est Deos esse, quoniam insitas eorum, vel potius innatas cognitiones habemus ; de quo autem omnium natura consentit, id verum esse necesse est, as Velleius the Epicurean argues. Since the belief of a Deity, neither rises from custom nor was enacted by Law, yet is unanimously assented to by all mankind ; it necessarily follows that there must be a Deity, because the Idea of it is so natural to us. If it were thus acknowledged in the Philosophical age of Greece, when men bent their wits to unsettle the Belief of such things as tended to Religion ; how much more might it be esteemed a general principle of humane nature in those elder times, when not so much as one dissenter appeared that we read of among the more antient Nations ? But Secondly, it was less needful for Moses to insist much on the proof of a Deity in his writings, when his very employment, and the history he wrote, was the greatest evidence that there was one. Could any of them question, whether there were a God, or no, who had heard his voice at mount Sinai, and had received a Law from him, who had been present at so many miracles which were done by Moses in Egypt and the Wilderness ? What more evident demonstration of God could be desired, than those many unparalleld miracles, which were wrought among them ?

And



And those who would not be convinced by them that there was a God, would certainly be convinced by nothing. *Thirdly*, It was unsuitable to the purpose of *Moses* to go about to prove any thing he delivered by the mere force of humane reason, because he writ as a person imployed by God; and therefore by the Arguments on which they were to believe his Testimony in whatever he writ, they could not but believe there was a God that imployed him. And from hence it is that *Moses* with so much Majesty and Authority begins the History of the Creation, with, *In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth*. There could be no greater evidence that there was an infinitely wise, good, and powerful God, than that the Universe was produced out of nothing by him; and what reason could there be to distrust his Testimony who relates it, who manifested not only that there was a God, but that he was imployed by him, by the miracles which he wrought? so that all our former discourse concerning the evidences of Divine revelation, are a most palpable demonstration of a Deity; for if there be such a power which can alter the course of nature when he pleases, the Being wherein it is, must needs be infinite; which is the same which we mean by God.

But yet for those whose minds are so coy and squeamish as to any thing of Divine revelation, we want not sufficient evidence in point of reason to prove to them the existence of a Deity. In order to which, I shall clear these following propositions.

Sect. 3.

1. That the true notion of a Deity is most agreeable to the faculties of mens souls, and most consonant to reason and the light of nature.

2. That those who will not believe that there is a God, do believe other things on far less reason, and must by their own principles deny some things which are apparently true.

3. That we have a certain evidence that there is a God, as it is possible for us to have, considering his nature.

That the true notion of God is most agreeable to the faculties of mens souls, and most consonant to reason and the light of nature: i. e. that the Idea of God (or that which we conceive in our minds when we think of God) is so far from being any ways repugnant to any principle of reason within us, that it is hard to pitch on any other notion which hath fewer  
entangle-

Prop. I.

entanglements in it, to a mind so far *Metaphysical* as to abstract from sense and prejudice. I grant it very difficult, nay impossible, for those to have any true settled notion of a God, who search for an *Idea* of him in their fancies, and were never conscious to themselves of any higher faculty in their souls than mere imagination. Such may have *imaginem Jovis*, or *galeatæ Minervæ*, as he in Tully speaks, some *Idea* of an Idol in their minds, but none of a true God. For we may as soon come by the sight of colours to understand the nature of sounds, as by any corporal phantasms come to have a true *Idea* of God. And although sometimes an *Idea* be taken for that impression of things which is lodged in the *Phantasie*, yet here we take it in a more general sense, as it contains the representation of any thing in the mind; as it is commonly said in the Schools that the *Divine Intellect* doth understand things by their *Idea's*, which are nothing else but the things themselves as they are objectively represented to the understanding. So that an *Idea* in its general sense in which we take it; is nothing else but the objective being of a thing as it terminates the understanding, and is the form of the act of Intellection: that which is then immediately represented to the mind in its perception of things, is the *Idea* or notion of it. Now such an *Idea* as this is, may be either true or false. For better understanding of which we must consider that an *Idea* in the soul may be considered two ways. 1. As it is a mode of cognition, or the act of the soul apprehending an object; now this way no *Idea* can be false; for as it is an act of the mind, every *Idea* hath its truth: for whether I imagine a golden mountain, or another, it matters not here; for the one *Idea* is as true as the other, considering it merely as an act of the mind. For the mind is as really employed about the one as the other; as the will is about an object whether it be feasible or no. 2. The *Idea* may be considered in regard of its objective reality, or as it represents some outward object; now the truth or falsehood of the *Idea* lies in the understanding passing judgment concerning the outward object, as existent, which doth correspond to the *Idea* which is in the mind. And the proneness of the understandings error in this case ariseth from the different nature of those things which are represented to the mind; for some of them are general and abstracted things



things, and do not at all suppose existence, as the nature of truth, of a Being, of cogitation; other *Idea's* depend upon existence supposed, as the *Idea* of the *Sun*, which I apprehend in my mind because I have seen it; but besides these, there are other *Idea's* in the *mind*, which the *understanding* forms within its self by its own power, as it is a principle of cogitation; such are those which are called *entia rationis*, and have no other existence at all but only in the *understanding*, as *Chimæra's*, *Centaures*, &c. Now as to these, we are to observe, that although the composition of these things together by the *understanding*, be that which makes these *Idea's* to be only fictitious, yet the *understanding* would not be able to compound such things, were they not severally represented to the *mind*; as unless we had known what a horse and a man had been, our minds could not have conjoyned them together in its apprehension. So that in these which are the most fictitious *Idea's*, we see, that although the *Idea* its self be a mere creature of the *understanding*, yet the *mind* could not form such an *Idea* but upon *pra-existent* matter, and some objective reality must be supposed in order to the intellectual conception of these *Anomalous* entities. By which we see that that strange kind of omnipotency which some have attributed to the *understanding*, lies not in a Power of conceiving things wholly impossible, or fancying *Idea's* of absolute non-entities, but in a kind of African Copulation of such species of things together, which in Nature seem wholly impossible, (as the Schools speak) or have no congruity at all in the order of the Universe. So that had there never been any such things in the World as matter and motion, it is very hard to conceive, how the *understanding* could have formed within its self the variety of the species of such things, which are the results of those two grand principles of the Universe. But because it is so impossible for minds not very contemplative and Metaphysical to abstract from matter, thence it is we are apt to imagine such a Power in the *understanding*, whereby it may form *Idea's* of such things which have no objective reality at all. I grant those we call *entia rationis* have no external reality as they are such; but yet I say, the existence of matter in the world, and the corporeal Phantasms of outward beings, are the foundation of the soul's conception of those entities, which have no existence beyond the humane Intellect.

Sect. 4.

The great enquiry then is, how far this *Plastick Power* of the *understanding*, may extend its self in its *forming* an *Idea* of *God*. That there is such a *one* in the minds of men, is evident to every one that *consults* his own *faculties*, and enquires of them, whether they cannot apprehend a *settled* and *consistent* notion of a *Being* which is *absolutely Perfect*. For that is all we understand by the *Idea* of *God*; not that there is any such *connate Idea* in the *Soul*, in the sense which *connate Idea's* are commonly understood; but that there is a *faculty* in the *Soul*, whereby upon the free use of *reason*, it can form within its self a *settled notion* of such a *Being*, which is as *perfect* as it is *possible* for us to conceive a *Being* to be. If any difficulty be made concerning the *forming* such a *notion* in ones mind, let the person who scruples it, only *enquire* of himself, whether he *judges* all *Beings* in the *world* equal; whether a *mushroom* hath in it all the *perfections* which *man* hath? which I suppose *none*, who have a mind within them can question. If then it be granted that *man* hath some *perfections* in him above *inferiour creatures*, it will be no matter of difficulty to shew wherein *man* exceeds other *inferiour Beings*. For is not *life* a greater *perfection* than the *want* of it? is not *reason* and *knowledge*, a *perfection* above *sense*? and so let us proceed to those things, wherein one *man* differs from another; for it is evident, that all *men* are not of *equal accomplishments*; is it not then *forecast* and *prudence* above *incogitancy* and *folly*? is not the *knowledge* of *causes* of things better than *stupidity* and *ignorance*? is not *beneficence* and *liberality* more noble than *parsimony* and *narrowness* of *spirit*? is not true *goodness* far above *debauchery* and *intemperance*? and are not all these far better, when they are joyned with such a *power* as hath no *limits*, or *bounds* at all? Now then is it not possible for a *mans mind*; proceeding in its ordinary way of *intellection*, to form a *notion* of such a *Being*, which hath *wisdom*, *goodness* and *power* in it, without any *limits* and *bounds* at all, or any of those *abatements*, which any of these *perfections* are found within *man*? For it is unconceivable, that the *mind* of *man* can attribute to its self *absolute perfection*, when it cannot but see its own *defects* in those *things* it excells other *creatures* in; and supposing it had *power*, *goodness* and *knowledge* far above what it hath; yet it cannot but say, that these *perfections* would be greater



greater if it were *always* possessed of them, and it were *impossible* that it should ever cease to be, or not have been. So that now joyning *infinite goodness, wisdom and power*, with *eternity and necessity of existence*, the result is the notion of a *Being absolutely perfect*. So that now whoever questions the *suitableness* of such a *notion* or *Idea* to the *faculties* of mens *souls*, must question the *truth* of his own *faculties*, and the method they proceed in, in their clearest *conceptions* and *ratiocinations*. And the *mind of man* may as well question the *truth* of any *Idea* it hath within its self, as of this we now discourse of. Nay, it may be far sooner *puzzled* in any of those *Idea's*, which are *transmitted* into the *Phantasie* by the *impressions* of *Corporeal Beings* upon the *Organs of sense*, than in this more *intellectual* and *abstracted Idea*, which depends wholly upon the mind.

Sect. 5.

All the *difficulty* now is, whether this *Idea* of such an *absolutely perfect Being*, be any thing else but the understanding's *Plastick power*, whereby it can *unite* all these *perfections* together in one *conception*; or doth it necessarily imply, that there must be such a *Being* really *existent*, or else I could never have formed such a *settled notion* of him in my mind? To this I answer, I. It is as much as I desire at present, that the *forming* of such an *Idea* in the *mind*, is as *suitable* and *agreeable* to our *faculties* as the *forming* the *conception* of any other *Being* in the *world*. For hereby it is most evident that the *notion* of a *God* imports nothing *incongruous* to *reason*, or *repugnant* to the *faculties* of our *souls*; but that the *mind* will *form* as *settled* and *clear a notion* of *God*, as of any thing which in the judgment of *Epicurus*, his *infallible senses* did the most assure him of. So that there can be no shadow of a *pretence*, why any should reject the *Being* of a *God*, because of the *impossibility* to conceive any such *Being* as *God* is. If to this it be objected, that *such things are implied in this Idea, which make it unconceivable, in that all the perfections in this being are supposed to be infinite, and infinity transcends our capacity of apprehension*. To this I answer, I. That those who deny *infinity* in *God*, must necessarily attribute it to something else, as to *infinite space*, *infinity* of *successions* of *ages* and *persons*, if the *World* were *eternal*; and therefore it is most *unreasonable* to reject any *notion* for that, which it is impossible, but if I deny that, I must attribute it to some-

thing else, to whose *Idea* it is far less proper than it is to *God's*.  
 2. Lest I should rather seek to avoid the *argument* than to satisfy it, I say, that though *infinite* as *infinite* cannot be comprehended, yet we may *clearly* and *distinctly* apprehend a *Being* to be of that *Nature*, that no *limits* can be assigned to it, as to its *Power* or *Presence*; which is as much as to understand it to be *infinite*. The *ratio formalis* of *infinity* may not be understood clearly and distinctly, but yet the *Being* which is *infinite* may be. *Infinity* its self cannot be on this account, because however *positive* we apprehend it, yet we always apprehend it in a *negative way*, because we conceive it by *denying* all *limitations* and *bounds* to it; but the *Being* which is *infinite* we apprehend in a *positive manner*, although not *adequately*, because we cannot comprehend all which is in it. As we may clearly and distinctly see the *Sea*, though we cannot discover the *bounds* of it; so may we clearly and distinctly apprehend some *Perfections* of *God* when we fix our minds on them, although we are not able to grasp them altogether in our *narrow* and *confined intellects*, because they are *Infinite*. Thus we see that *God's Infinity* doth not at all abate the *clearness* and *distinctness* of the *notion* which we have of *God*; so that though the *Perfections* of *God* are without *bounds* or *limits*, yet it bears no repugnancy at all to mens natural *faculties*, to have a settled *Idea* of a *Being* *Ininitely perfect* in their minds.

Sett. 6.

To the *Question* I answer, It seems highly *probable* and far more *consonant* to *reason* than the *contrary*, that this *Idea* of *God* upon the *mind* of man, is no merely *fictitious Idea*, but that it is really *imprinted* there by that *God* whose *Idea* it is, and therefore doth suppose a *reality* in the thing correspondent to that *objective reality* which is in the understanding. For although I am not so well satisfied that the mere *objective reality* of the *Idea* of *God* doth exceed the *efficiency* of the mind, as that *Idea* is nakedly considered in its self, because of the unlimited *power* of the *understanding* in *conception*: Yet I say, considering that *Idea* in all the *circumstances* of it, it seems highly *probable* that it is no mere *ens rationis*, or *figment* of the *understanding*; and that will appear on these considerations. 1. This *Idea* is of such a *Nature* as could not be formed from the *understanding's* consideration of any *corporeal phantasms*.

Because



Because whatever hath any thing of *matter* in it, involves of necessity many *imperfections* along with it; for every part of *matter* is divisible into more parts. Now it is a thing evident to *natural light*, that it is a greater *perfection* not to be divisible than to be so. Besides, *corporeal phantasms* are so far from helping us in forming this *Idea*, that they alone hinder us from a *distinct conception* of it, while we attend to them; because these bear no *proportion* at all to such a *being*. So that this *Idea* however must be a pure *act of intellection*, and therefore supposing there were no other *faculty* in man but *imagination*, it would bear the greatest *repugnancy* to our *conceptions*, and it would be according to the *principles* of *Epicurus* and some modern *Philosophers*, a thing wholly *impossible* to form an *Idea* of *God*, unless with *Epicurus* we imagine him to be *corporeal*, which is to say, he is no *God*. Which was the reason that *Tully* said, *Epicurus* did only, *nomine ponere, re tollere Deos*, because such a notion of *God* is repugnant to *natural light*. So that if this *Idea* doth wholly abstract from *corporeal phantasms*; it thereby appears that there is a higher *faculty* in man's *soul* than mere *imagination*, and it is hardly conceivable whence a *faculty* which thus extends it self to an *infinite object*, should come, but from an *infinite Being*: especially if we consider, Secondly, That the *understanding* in forming this *Idea* of *God*, doth not by distinct *acts*, first collect one *perfection*, and then another, and at last unite these together, but the *simplicity* and *unity* of all these *perfections* is as necessarily conceived as any of them. Granting then that the *understanding* by the observing of several *perfections* in the world, might be able to abstract these severally from each *Being* wherein they were, yet whence should the *Idea* of the *unity* and *inseparability* of all these *perfections* come? The mind may, it is true, knit some things together in *fictitious Idea's*, but then those are so far from *unity* with each other, that in themselves they speak mutual *repugnancy* to one another, which makes them proper *entia rationis*; but these several *perfections* are so far from speaking *repugnancy* to each other, that the *unity* and *inseparability* of them is as necessary to the forming of this *Idea*, as any other *perfection* whatsoever. So that from hence it appears that the consideration of the *perfections* which are in the *Creatures*, is only an occasion given to the mind to help it in its *Idea* of *God*, and  
not

not that the *Idea* it self depends upon those *perfections* as the *causes* of it ; as in the clearest *Mathematical truths* the manner of *demonstration* may be necessary to help the understanding to its clearer *assent*, though the things in themselves be undoubtedly *true*. For all minds are not equally capable of the same *truths* ; some are of quicker *apprehension* than others are ; now although to slower apprehensions a more particular way of *demonstrating* things be necessary , yet the *truths* in themselves are *equal*, though they have not equal evidence to several persons.

3. It appears that this is no mere *fictitious Idea* from the *uniformity* of it in all *persons* who have freed themselves from the *entanglements* of *corporeal phantasms*. Those we call *entia rationis*, we find by experience in our *minds*, that they are formed *ad placitum* ; we may imagine them as many ways as we please ; but we see it is quite otherwise in this *Idea* of *God* ; for in those *attributes* or *perfections* which by the *light* of *Nature* we attribute to *God*, there is an *uniform consent* in all those who have divested their minds of *corporeal phantasms* in their *conceptions* of *God*. For while men have agreed that the object of their *Idea* is a being *absolutely perfect*, there hath been no dissent in the *perfections* which have been attributed to it ; none have questioned but *infinite wisdom*, *goodness*, and *power*, joynd with necessity of *existence*, have been all implied in this *Idea*. So that it is scarce possible to instance in any one *Idea*, no not of those things which are most *obvious* to our *senses*, wherein there hath been so great an *uniformity* of mens *conceptions* as in this *Idea* of *God*. And the most gross *corporeal Idea* of the most sensible matter hath been more liable to *heats* and *disputes* among *Philosophers*, than this *Idea* of a *Being infinite* and purely *spiritual*. Which strongly proves my present *proposition*, that this *Idea* of *God* is very *consonant* to *natural light* ; for it is hardly conceivable that there should be so *universal* a *consent* of minds in this *Idea*, were it not a *natural result* from the free use of our *reason* and *faculties*. And that which adds further weight to this argument is, that although *Infinity* be so necessarily implied in this *Idea* of *God*, yet men do not attribute all kind of *infinite* things to *God* ; for there being conceivable *infinite number*, *infinite longitude*, as well as *infinite power* and *knowledge*, our minds readily attribute the latter  
to



to God, and as readily abstract the other from his nature, which is an argument this *Idea* is not *fictitious*, but argues *reality* in the thing *correspondent* to our conception of it. So much may suffice to clear the first proposition, *viz.* *That the notion of a God is very suitable to the faculties of men's souls, and to that light of nature which they proceed by in forming the conceptions of things.*

Those who deny that there is a God, do assert other things on far less evidence of reason, and must by their own principles deny some things which are apparently true. One would expect that such persons who are apt to condemn the whole world of folly in believing the truth of Religion, and would fain be admired as men of a deeper reach, and greater wit and sagacity than others, would, when they have exploded a Deity, at least give us some more rational and consistent account of things, than we can give that there is a God. But on the contrary we find the reasons on which they reject a Deity so lamentably weak, and so easily retorted upon themselves, and the hypotheses they substitute instead of a Deity so precarious, obscure and uncertain, that we need no other argument to evince the reasonableness of Religion, than from the manifest folly as well as impiety of those who oppose it. Which we shall make evident by these two things: 1. *That while they deny a Deity, they assert other things on far less reason.* 2. *That by those principles on which they deny a Deity, they must deny some things which are apparently true.*

Sect. 7.

Prop. 2.

1. *That they assert some things on far less reason than we do that there is a God.* For if there be not an infinitely powerfull God who produced the world out of nothing, it must necessarily follow according to the different principles of the Aristotelian and Epicurean Atheists, that either the world was as it is from all eternity, or else that it was at first made by the fortuitous concurrence of Atoms. Now I appeal to the reason of any person, who hath the free use of it, Whether either of these two hypotheses urged with the same or greater difficulties, &c. be not far more weakly proved than the existence of a Deity is, or the production of the world by him.

1. *They run themselves into the same difficulties which they would avoid in the belief of a Deity; and nothing can be a greater evidence of an intangled mind than this is: To deny a thing*  
because

because of some difficulty in it, and instead of it to assert another thing which is chargeable with the very same difficulty in a higher degree. Thus when they reject a Deity, because they cannot understand what infinity means; both these hypotheses are liable to the same intricacy in apprehending the nature of something infinite. For according to the Epicureans, there must be an infinite space, and what greater ease to the mind is there in conceiving an Idea of that than of an Infinite Being? And if the world be eternal, there must have been past an infinite succession of ages; and is not the understanding as easily lost in this, as in an eternal Being which created the world? For if the course of generations in the world had no beginning at all, (which necessarily follows upon the eternity of the world) then an infinite number of successions are already past, and if past, then at an end, and so we find an infinite which hath had an end, which is a consequence becoming one who avoids the belief of a Deity, because Infinity is an unconceivable thing. Besides, if the number of generations hath been infinite; these two consequences will unavoidably follow, which the reason of any one but an Atheist would startle at, that one Infinite may be greater than another, and that the part is equal to the whole. For let him fix where he please, in the course of generations, I demand whether in the Great grandfather's time the succession of generations was finite or infinite; if finite, then it had a beginning; and so the world not eternal; if infinite, then I ask, whether there were not a longer succession of generations in the time of his Great-grand-children, and so there must be a number greater than that which was infinite; for the former succession was infinite, and this hath more generations in it than that had; but if it be said that they were equal, because both infinite, then the succession of generations to the Grand-father, being but a part of that which extends to his Grand-children and posterity, the part is equal to the whole. And is not now the notion of an Infinite Being enough to flumble an Atheist's reason, when it can so nimbly leap over so apparent contradictions? I insist not on this as an evident demonstration to prove a Deity, which possibly it may not amount to, because it may only demonstrate the impossibility of our understandings comprehending the nature of Infinity. But however it doth most evidently demonstrate the folly and unreasonableness



ableness of the *Atheist* who rejects the *Being* of *God* on the account of his *Infinity*, when his understanding is more lost in apprehending an *infinite* succession of generations which follows from his supposition of the *eternity* of the world. If then it be impossible, as it is, upon any principles whatsoever, to avoid the conception of somewhat *infinite* and *eternal*, either *matter* or *space*, or some *Being*, let any one appeal to his own reason, whether it be not more agreeable to that, to attribute these *perfections* to such a *Being*, to whose *Idea* they necessarily belong, than to attribute them to this *world*, in whose conception they are not at all implied; but on the contrary they do far more puzzle our understandings than when we conceive them to be in *God*. If somewhat must have a continued *duration*, and be of an *unbounded* nature, how much more rational is it to conceive *wisdom*, *power*, and *goodness* to be conjoined with *eternity* and *infinity*, than to bestow these attributes upon an empty *space*, or upon dull and unactive *matter*? It cannot be reason then, but some more base and unworthy principle which makes the *Atheist* question the *Being* of *God*, because his *perfections* are unconceivable, when according to his own principles the most puzzling attributes of *God* return upon him with more force and violence, and that in a more inexplicable manner.

As the *Atheist* must admit those things himself which he rejects the *Being* of *God* for; so he admits them upon far weaker grounds than we do attribute them to *God*. If any thing may be made evident to man's natural reason concerning the existence of a *Being* so infinite as *God* is, we doubt not but to make it appear that we have great assurance of the *Being* of *God*, but how far must the *Atheist* go, how heartily must he beg before his hypothesis either of the fortuitous concurrence of atoms, or eternity of the world will be granted to him? For if we stay till he proves either of these by evident and demonstrative reasons, the world may have an end before he proves his atoms could give it a beginning, and we may find it eternal, à parte post, before he can prove it was so à parte ante. For the proof of a *Deity* we appeal to his own faculties, reason and conscience; we make use of arguments before his eyes; we bring the universal sense of mankind along with us: But for his principles, we must wholly alter the present stage of the world, and crumble the whole Universe into little particles; we must

Sect. 8.

2.

grind the Sun to powder, and by a new way of interment turn the earth into dust and ashes, before we can so much as imagine how the world could be framed. And when we have thus far begged leave to imagine things to be what they never were, we must then stand by in some infinite space to behold the friskings and dancings about of these little particles of matter, till by their frequent rencounters and justlings one upon another, they at last link themselves together, and run so long in a round till they make whirl-pools enough for Sun, Moon and Stars, and all the bodies of the Universe to emerge out of. But what was it which at first set these little particles of matter in motion? Whence came so great variety in them to produce such wonderfull diversities in bodies as there are in the world? How came these casual motions to hit so luckily into such admirable contrivances as are in the Universe? When once I see a thousand blind men run the point of a sword in at a key-hole without one missing; when I find them all frisking together in a spacious field, and exactly meeting all at last in the very middle of it; when I once find, as Tully speaks, the *Annals* of *Ennius* fairly written in a heap of sand, and as *Kepler's* wife told him, a room full of herbs moving up and down fall down into the exact order of sallets, I may then think the *Atomical hypothesis* probable, and not before. But what evidence of reason or demonstration have we that the great bodies of the world did result from such a motion of these small particles? It is possible to be so, saith *Epicurus*; what if we grant it possible? can no things in the world be, which it is possible might have been otherwise? What else thinks *Epicurus* of the generations of things now? they are such certainly as the world now is, and yet he believes it was once otherwise: Must therefore a bare possibility of the contrary make us deny our reason, silence conscience, contradict the universal sense of mankind by excluding a Deity out of the world? But whence doth it appear possible? Did we ever find any thing of the same nature with the world produced in such a manner by such a concourse of atoms? Or is it because we find in natural beings, how much these particles of matter serve to solve the *Phænomena* of nature? But doth it at all follow, because now under Divine providence which wisely orders the world, and things in it, that these particles, with their several affections and motion, may give



give us a tolerable account of many appearances as to bodies, that therefore the *Universe* had its original merely by a concretion of these, without any divine hand to order and direct their motion? But of this more, when we come to the creation of the world; our design now is only to compare the notion of a Deity, and of the *Atheist's* hypothesis in point of perspicuity and evidence of reason: of which let any one who hath reason judge. Thus we see how the *Atheist* in denying a Deity; must assert something else instead of it, which is pressed with the same, if not greater difficulties, and proved by far less reason.

*The Atheist by the same principles on which he denies a God, must deny some things which are apparently true.* Which will be evident by our running over the most plausible pretences which he insists upon. Sect. 9.  
2.

I. Because the Being of God cannot be demonstrated. But how doth the *Atheist* mean it? Is it because God cannot be demonstrated to sense, that we cannot [*digito monstrari & dicier hie est*] point at him with our fingers? It is a sign there is little of reason left, where sense is made the only Umpire of all kinds of Beings. Must all intellectual Beings be proscribed out of the order of Nature, because they cannot pass the scrutiny of sense? And by the same reason all colours shall be dashed out because they cannot be heard; all noises silenced, because they cannot be seen; for why may not one sense be set to judge of all objects of sense with far more reason, than sense it self be set as Judge over Intellectual Beings? But yet it is wisely done of the *Atheist* to make sense his judge; for if we once appeal to this, he knows our cause is lost; for as he said of a Physician, when one asked him, whether he had any experience of him: no, said he, *Si periculum fecissem, non viverem*; If I had tryed him, I had been dead e'er now; so here, If God were to be tryed by the judgment of sense, he must cease to be God; for how can an infinite and spiritual Being be discerned by the judgment of sense? and if he be not an infinite and spiritual Being, he is not God. But it may be the *Atheist's* meaning is not so gross, but he intends such a demonstration to reason as that two and two make four, or that the whole is greater than the parts; with such a demonstration he would sit down contented. But will no less than this serve him? what becomes then of the world's being made by a fortuitous concurrence of atoms? is this as evi-

dent as that two and two make four ? And will the *Philosophical Atheist* really believe nothing in *nature*, but what is as evident to him in *material Beings*, as that the whole is greater than the parts ? By any means let *Atheists* then write *Philosophy*, that at last the *Clocks* in *London* may strike together, and the *Philosophers* agree ; for I suppose none of them question that. But yet it is possible the *Atheist* may in a good humour abate something of this, and mean by *demonstration* such a proof as takes away all difficulties. If he means as to the ground of assent, we undertake it ; if as to the object apprehended, we reject it as unreasonable, because it is impossible a Being infinite should be comprehended by us ; for if it could, it were no longer infinite. But let us try this principle by other things, and how evident is it, that on this account some things must be denied which himself will confess to be true ? for instance, that *opprobrium Philosophorum*, the divisibility of quantity, or extended matter into finite or infinite parts ; let him take which side he please, and see whether by the force of the arguments on either side, if he hold to this principle, he must not be forced to deny that there is any such thing as matter in the world : and then we may well have an infinite empty space, when by the force of this one principle, both God and matter are banished quite out of the world. But if the *Atheist* will but come one step lower, and by his demonstration intend nothing else but such a sufficient proof of it as the nature of the thing is capable of, he will not only speak most consonantly to reason, but may be in some hopes of gaining satisfaction. For it is most evident, that all things are not capable of the like way of proof ; and that in some cases the possibility of the contrary must be no hindrance to an undoubted assent. What these proofs are, will appear afterwards. I come to the next ground of the *Atheist's* opinion, which is,

2. The weakness of some arguments brought to prove a Deity. But let us grant that some arguments will not do it, doth it therefore follow that none can do it ? What if some have proved the *Sun* to be the center of the world ; and the motion of the earth, by very weak arguments, will the *Atheist* therefore question it ? what if *Epicurus* hath proved his atomical hypothesis by some silly sophisms, will the *Atheist* therefore rather believe the creation of the world than it ? What if the *Atheist* may make himself sport at some stories of apparitions insisted on to prove:



prove a *Deity*, doth it therefore follow there is no *God*, because some persons have been *over-credulous*? What if some having more *zeal* than *knowledge*, may attribute such things to *God's immediate hand*, which may be produced by natural causes, doth it thence follow that *God* hath no hand in governing the world at all? What if *fears*, and *hopes* and *persuasions*, may depend much on principles of education, must conscience then be resolved wholly into these? What if some devout *Melancholist* may imbrace the issues of his own imagination for the impressions of the *Divine Spirit*, doth it therefore follow, that religion is nothing but strength of fancy improved by principles of education? What if some of the numerous proofs of a *Deity* were cut off, and only those made use of, which are of greatest force, would the truth suffer at all by that? I grant, advantage is often taken against a thing more by one weak argument brought for it, than for it by the strongest proofs: but I say, it is unreasonable it should be so; and were men rational and ingenuous it would not be so. Many times arguments may be good in their order, but they are mis-placed; some may prove the thing rational, which may not prove it true; some may shew the absurdities of the adversaries, rejecting the thing, which may not be sufficient to prove it; now when men number and not weigh their arguments, but give them in the lump to the main question, without fitting them to their several places, they do more disservice to the main of the battle by the disorder of their forces, than they can advantage it by the number of them.

3. Another great pretence the *Atheist* hath, is, that religion is only an invention of *Politicians*, which they awe people with as they please, and therefore tell them of a *God*, and another world, as *Mothers* send young children to school to keep them in better order, that they may govern them with the greater ease. To this I answer, 1. Religion I grant, hath a great influence upon the well-governing the world, nay so great, that were the *Atheists* opinion true, and the world perswaded of it, it were impossible the world could be well governed. For the Government of the world in civil societies, depends not so much on force, as the sacred bonds of duty and allegiance, which hold a Nation that owns religion as true, in far surer obligations to endeavour the peace and welfare of a Na-

tion than ever violence can do. For in this case only an opportunity is watched for to shake off that which they account a yoke upon their necks ; whereas when mens minds are possessed with a sense of duty and obligation to obedience out of conscience, the reins may be held with greater ease ; and yet the people be better managed by them, than by such as only gail and invrage them. So that I grant true Religion to be the most serviceable principle for the governing of civil societies ; but withal, I say, 2. It were impossible religion should be so much made use of for the governing of people, were there not a real propensity and inclination to religion imprinted on the minds of men. For as, did not men love themselves, and their children, their estates and interests, it were impossible to keep them in obedience to Laws ; but doth it follow, because Magistrates perswade people to obedience by suiting Laws to the general interest of men, that therefore the Magistrates first made them love themselves and their own concerns ? So it is in religion, the Magistrate may make use of this propensity to religion in men for civil ends, but his making use of it doth suppose it and not instill it. For were Religion nothing else in the world but a design only of Politicians, it would be impossible to keep that design from being discovered at one time or other, and when once it came to be known, it would hurry the whole world into confusion ; and the people would make no scruple of all oaths and obligations, but every one would seek to do others what mischief he could if he had opportunity, and obey no further than fear and force constrained him. Therefore no principle can be so dangerous to a state as Atheism, nor any thing more promote its peace than true Religion ; and the more men are perswaded of the truth of Religion, they will be the better subjects, and the more useful in civil societies. As well then may an Atheist say there is no such thing as good nature in the world, because that is apt to be abused, nor any such thing as love, because that may be cheated, as that Religion is nothing but a design, because men may make it stalk to their private ends. Thus we see how the Atheist by the force of those principles on which he denies a God, must be forced to deny other things, which yet by his own confession are apparently true.



So I come to the third Proposition, which is, *That we have as certain evidence that there is a God, as we can have, considering his nature.* When we demand the proof of a thing, our first eye must be to the nature of the thing which we desire may be proved; For things equally true, are not capable of equal evidence, nor have like manners of probation. There is no demonstration in Euclide will serve to prove that there are such places as the Indies: we cannot prove the earth is round by the judgment of sense; nor that the soul is immortal by corporeal phantasms. Every distinct kind of Being hath its peculiar way of probation; and therefore it ought not to be at all wondered at, if the Supreme and infinite Being have his peculiar way of demonstrating himself to the minds of men. If then we have as evident proofs of the existence of God, as we can have, considering the infinity of his nature, it is all which in reason we can desire; and of that kind of proofs we have these following. For, 1. If God hath stamped an universal character of himself upon the minds of men. 2. If the things in the world are the manifest effects of infinite wisdom, goodness and power. 3. If there be such things in the world which are unaccountable without a Deity, then we may with safety and assurance conclude that there is a God.

1. That God hath imprinted an universal character of himself on the minds of men, and that may be known by two things. 1. If it be such as bears the same importance among all persons. 2. If it be such as cannot be mistaken for the character of any thing else.

1. I begin with the first, whereby I shall prove this character to be universal, because the whole world hath consented in it. This argument we may rely on with the greater security, because it was the only argument which retained the Deity in the ancient School of Epicurus; which could he have thought of as easie way of evading, as he thought he had found out as to the Origin of the universe, he was no such great friend to the very name of a God, as to have retained it as an Anticipation or Prolepsis of humane nature. And this argument from the universal consent of the world, was that which bore the greatest sway among the Philosophers, who went by nothing but dictates of natural light, which they could not so clearly discover in any things, as in those which all mankind did unanimously consent

sent in. Two things I shall make out this by. 1. *That no sufficient account can be given of so universal a consent, unless it be supposed to be the voice of nature.* 2. *That the dissent of any particular persons is not sufficient to controul so universal an agreement.*

1. *That no sufficient account of it can be given, but only by asserting it to be a dictate of nature.* In so strange a dissent as there hath been in the world concerning most of those things which relate to mankind in common, as the models of government, the Laws they are ruled by, the particular rites and customs of worship; we have the greatest reason to judge that those common principles which were the foundations on which all these several different customs were built, were not the effect of any positive Laws, nor the mere force of principles of education, but something which had a deeper root and foundation in the principles of nature it self. A common and universal effect must flow from some common and universal cause. So the Stoick argues in Tully, *If there were no God, non tam stabilis opinio permaneret, nec confirmaretur diuturnitate temporis, nec una cum sæculis atatibusque hominum inveterare potuisset.* It is strange to think that mankind in so many ages of the world should not grow wise enough to rid it self of so troublesome an opinion as that was, of the Being of God, had it not been true.

De Nat. Deor.  
ll. 2.

We see in all the alterations of the world, other vain opinions have been detected, refuted and shaken off; if this had been such, how comes it to remain the same in all ages, and Nations of the world? *Opinionum commenta delet dies, naturæ judicia confirmat.* It is a great discredit to Time to make it like a River in that sense, that it bears up only lighter things when matters of greatest weight are sunk to the bottom and past recovery. This may pass for a handsome allusion, as to the opinions and writings of particular persons, but cannot be understood of such things which are founded on the universal consent of the world; for these common notions of humane nature are so suited to the temper of the world, that they pass down the strong current of Time with the same facility that a well built ship, though of good burden, doth furrow the Ocean. So that if we must adhere to the Allegory, it is easily replied, that it is not the weight of things which makes them sink, but the unsuitableness of their superficies to that of the Water;



Water ; so we see a small piece of wood will sink, when a stately ship is born up ; so such things which have not that agreeableness in them to the dictates of Nature may soon be lost, but such as lie so even upon the superficies of the soul, will still float above the water, and never be lost in the swiftest current of Time. Thus we assert this universal consent of mankind, as to the existence of a Deity, to be a thing so consonant to our Natural reason, that as long as there are men in the World it will continue.

But now it is hardly conceivable, according to the Principles of Epicurus, how mankind should universally agree in some common sentiments ; much less how it should have such an anticipation as himself grants of the Being of God. For if the soul be nothing else but some more active and vigorous particles of matter (as Diogenes Laertius tells us, that his opinion was that the soul was nothing else but a System *ἐξ ατόμων λειπώντων καὶ σφαιρικῶν*, of the most smooth and round atoms) if so, it is very hard apprehending how any such things as anticipations or common Notions can be lodged in the soul ; For if our souls be nothing else but some small spherical corpuscles which move up and down the body, as the Epicurean Philosophy supposeth, then all our knowledge and perception must depend on motion, which motion must be by the impression of external objects : which Lucretius acknowledgeth and contends for.

Sect. II.

Lib. 10. in v.  
Epic. v. Gassend.  
To. 2. l. 3. Sect. 3.

*Invenies primis à sensibus esse creatam  
Notitiam veri.*

[ Lib. 4.

If then our knowledge of truth comes in by our senses, and sensation doth wholly depend upon the impression of outward objects, what becomes of all common Notions and of the Prolepsis of a Deity ? unless we suppose the knowledge of a Deity came in by sense, which Epicurus himself denies when he attributes to the Deity not corpus, but quasi corpus, as Tully tells us, and therefore he is not a proper object of sense. So that it is impossible there should be any such thing as a natural Notion which may be the ground of universal consent among men, according to the Doctrine of Epicurus. And therefore it stands to all reason in the world, that if our senses be the only com-

De Nat. Dcor.  
lib. 1.

petent *Judges of truth*, men should differ about nothing more than such things which cannot be tryed by the judgment of *sense* ; Such as the notion of a *God* is ; (for where should men be more uncertain in their judgments, than in such things which they have no rule at all to go by in the judging of?) but we are so far from *finding* it so that men are nothing so much agreed about the *objects of sense*, as they are about the *existence of a Deity* ; and therefore we see this universal consent of *mankind* concerning a *God*, cannot be *salved* by the principles of those who deny it ; according to which no account at all can be given of any such things as *universal or common notions*.

\* *Seft.* 12.

Neither can this universal consent of mankind be *enervated* with any greater probability by those *Atheists* who assert the *eternity of the world*, and resolve this consent wholly into mere *tradition*, such as the *Fables of Poets* were conveyed in from one to another. For I demand concerning this *tradition*, Whether ever it had any *beginning* or no ? If it had no *beginning*, it could be no *tradition* ; for that must run up to some persons from whom it first came ; again, if it had no *beginning*, it was *necessary* that it should always be, on the same accounts on which they make the *World eternal*. And if it be *necessary*, it must be *antecedent* to any free act of *man's will* which *tradition* supposeth ; and so some false opinion would be found to be as *necessary* as the *World's being eternal*, (and by consequence the *World's being eternal* may be a *necessary false opinion*.) but if any *false opinion* be once granted *necessary*, it then follows that our *faculties* are not *true*, and that *nature* is a necessary cause of some *notorious falsity*, which is the highest *impeachment* the *Atheist* could have laid upon his only adored *Nature* ; which must then have done that, (which *Aristotle* was ashamed to think ever nature should be guilty of) which is *something in vain* ; for to what *purpose* should man have *rational faculties*, if he be under an unavoidable *necessity* of being *deceived* ? If then it be granted that this *tradition* had once a *beginning*, either it *began* with *humane Nature*, or *humane Nature* did exist long before it ; if it *began* with *mankind*, then *mankind* had a *beginning*, and so the *world* was not *eternal* ; if *mankind* did exist before this *tradition*, I then enquire in what *time*, and by what *means*, came this *tradition* first to be embraced, if it doth not suppose the *existence of a Deity* ? Can any age be



be mentioned in *history*, wherein this tradition was not universally received ? and which is most to our purpose, the further we go back in *history*, the fuller the world was of *Deities*, if we believe the *Heathen Histories* ; but however no age can be *instanced* in, wherein this *tradition* began first to be *believed* in the World ; we can trace the *Poetick Fables* to their true *original*, by the *testimonies* of those who believed them ; we know the particular *Authors* of them, and what *course* they took in *divulging* of them ; we find great *diversities* among themselves in the *meaning* of them, and many *nations* that never heard of them. But all things are quite otherwise in this *tradition* ; we have *none* to fix on as the *first Authors* of it ; if the world were *eternal*, and the *belief* of a *Deity* fabulous, we cannot understand by what *artifice* a fabulous *tradition* could come to be so universally received in the world, that no Nation of old could be *instanced* in by the *inquisitive Philosophers*, but however rude and barbarous it was, yet it owned a *Deity*. How could such a *tradition* be spread so far, but either by *force* or *fraud* ? it could not be by *force*, because *embraced* by an unanimous *consent* where no *force* at all hath been used, and hath been so *rooted* in the very *Natures* of those *people* who have been most tender of their *liberties*, that they have *resented* no *indignity* so highly, as any *affronts* they conceived to be offered to their *Gods*. Nay, and where any *persons* would seem to quit the *belief* of a *Deity*, we find what *force* and *violence* they have used to their own reason and *Conscience* to bring themselves to *Atheism*, which they could not subdue their *minds* to any longer than the *will* could command the *understanding*, which when it gained but a little *liberty* to examine it *self*, or view the world, or was *alarmed* with *thunder*, *earth-quakes* or *violent sicknesses*, did bring back again the *sense* of a *Deity* with greater *force* and *power* than they had endeavoured to shake it off with. Now had this *tradition* come by *force* into the world, there would have been a secret *exultation* of *mind* to be *freed* from it, as we see *Nature* rejoiceth to *shake* off every thing which is *violent*, and to *settle* every thing according to its due order. It is only *fraud* then which can be with any *reason* Imagined in this case ; and how unreasonable it is to imagine *it* here, will appear to any one who doth

consider how extremely *jealous* the *world* is of being imposed upon by the *subtily* of such who are thought to be the greatest *Politicians*. For the very opinion of their *subtily* makes them apt to suspect a *design* in every thing they speak or do, so that nothing doth more generally hinder the entertaining of any *motion* so much among *vulgar* people, as that it comes from a *person* reputed very *politick*. So that the most *politick* way of gaining upon the apprehensions of the *vulgar*, is by taking upon one the greatest appearance of *simplicity* and *integrity* ; and this now could not be done by such *Politicians* which we now speak of, but by *accommodating* themselves to such *things* in the *people* which were so consonant to their *Natures*, that they could suspect no *design* at all in the *matters* propounded to them. And thus I assert it to have been in the present *case*, in all those *Politick* *Governours* who at first brought the *world* into both *civil* and *religious Societies* ; after they were grown *rude* and *barbarous* ; for as it had been *impossible* to have brought them into *civil Societies*, unless there had been supposed an inclination to *Society* in them, so it had been equally *impossible* to have brought them to embrace any particular way of *Religion*, unless there had been a natural propensity to *Religion* implanted in them, and founded in the general belief of the existence of a *Deity*. And therefore we never find any of the ancient founders of *Common-wealths* go about to persuade the *people* that there was a *God*, but this they supposed and made their *advantage* of it, the better to draw the *people* on to embrace that way of *worship*, which they delivered to them, as most suitable to their own design. And this is plainly evident in the vast difference of *designs* and *interests* which were carried on in the *Heathen world* upon this general apprehension of a *Deity*. How came the *world* to be so easily abused into *Religions* of all shapes and fashions, had not there been a natural inclination in mens souls to *Religion*, and an *Indelible Idea* of a *Deity* on the minds of men ? Were then this propensity groundless, and this *Idea* fictitious, it were the greatest slur imaginable, which could be cast upon *Nature*, that when the instincts of irrational agents argue something real in them ; only man the most Noble Being of the visible world, must be fatally carried to the belief of that which never was.

Which



Which yet hath so great a force and awe upon man, that nothing creates so great anxieties in his life as this doth; nothing lays him more open to the designs of any who have an intent to abuse him. But yet further, these Politicians who first abused the world, in telling them there was a God, did they themselves believe there was a God or no? If they did, then they had no such end as abusing the world into such a belief. If they did not, upon what accounts did they believe there was none, when the people were so ready to believe there was one? Was that as certain a tradition before that there was no God, as afterwards they made it to be that there was? If so, then all those people whom they perswaded to believe there was a God, did before, all believe there was none; and how can it possibly enter into the reason of any man to think, that people who had been brought up in the belief that there was no God at all, nor any state after this life, should all unanimously quit the principles of education which tended so much to their ease and pleasure here, to believe there was a God and another life, and thereby to fill themselves full of fears and disquietments, merely because their Rulers told them so? Again, if these Rulers themselves were so wise as not to believe a Deity, can we imagine there ever was such an age of the world wherein it fell out so happily, that only the Rulers were wise, and all the subjects fools? But it may be, it will be said, that all who were wise themselves did not believe a Deity, but yet consented to the practice of Religion, because it was so usefull for the Government of mankind; but can it be thought that all these wise men which we must suppose of several ranks and degrees, (for Philosophers are not always States-men, nor States-men Philosophers) should so readily concur in such a thing which tended most to the Interest of the Prince, and to the abuse of the world? Would none of them be ready to assert the truth, though it were but to make a party of their own, and discover to the people, that it was only the ambition and design of their Governours which sought to bring the people to slavery by the belief of such things which were contrary to the tradition of their fore-fathers, and would make their lives, if they believed them, continually troublesome and unquiet? Or if we could suppose things should hit thus in one Nation, what is this to the whole World which the Atheist here supposeth eternal? What, did all the Rulers

of

of the *world* exactly agree in one moment of time ; or at least in one *age* thus to abuse the World ? Did the *designs* of *Governours* and the *credulity* of all *people* fall out to be so *suitable* together ? But on the contrary, we do not find that *Governours* can have the *judgments* of *people* so at their command, that they can make them to *believe* what they please ; if it were so, we may well say with that *Atheistical Pope*, *Hec quam minimo regitur mundus ; What a twine thread will rule the world !* But granting these things, (which any but an *Atheist* will say are *impossible* ) yet whence should it come to pass that the *world* which is generally led more by the *opinions* of their *fore-fathers*, than by *reason*, should so *cancel* that former *tradition* that there was no *God*, that no remaining *foot-steps* of it can be traced in any history of those times ? Or did the *Governours* all consent to abolish all *records* of it ? *Publick* and *written* I grant they might, but not *those* out of men's *minds* and *memories* ; which would have been for the *ease* of the *minds* of their *posterity* conveyed in some secret *Cabala* from *Fathers* to their *Children*. It may be it will be said, *so it was*, but men durst not *profess* it for fear of the *Laws* ; but, it is not evident that the *Laws* of all the ancient *Common-wealths* were so *severe* against *Atheism*, and withall how came some of the *wisest* and most *Philosophical* men of *Greece* and *Rome* to *embrace* the *existence* of a *Deity* as a *thing* far more *consonant* to *reason* than the contrary opinion, and established their *belief* on such *evidences* from *nature* it self, that none of their *Antagonists* were able to answer them ? It was not certainly the fear of *Laws* which made men *rational* and *inquisitive* into the *natures* and *causes* of things ; and yet those who were *such* amidst the great *Idolatry* of the *Heathen*, and being *destitute* of *divine revelation*, yet freely and firmly *assented* to the *existence* of a *Deity*. Had it been only *fraud* and *imposture* which brought men to believe a *God*, whence came it to pass that this *fraud* was not *discovered* by these *Philosophers*, who were far better able by their *nearness* to those *eldest times*, and much converse abroad in other Nations (for some travelled into *Agypt*, *Chaldea*, *Persia*, *India*, merely to gain *knowledge* ) to have found out such an *imposture*, had it been such, than any of our modern *Atheists* ? Whence come *these* now in this almost *decrepit age* of the *world* to be the first *smellers* out of so great a *design* ? By what

means,



*means*, what *tokens* and *evidence* came such an *imposture* to their *knowledge*? Because, forsooth, *the world is still apt to be abused by a pretence of Religion*; but he that doth not see how silly and ridiculous a *Sophism* that is, either by his own *reason*, or by what hath gone before; hath *wit* and *reason* little enough to be an *Atheist*. Some therefore who would seem a little *wiser* than the *vulgar sort of Atheists* (for it seems there is a *vulgus* among them too, I wish it be more for their *mean-ness* than *multitude*) are so far *convinced* of the *unreasonableness* of judging that the *belief* of a *Deity* came in by *fraud*, that finding it so *general* and *universal*, they attribute it to as *general* and *universal* a *cause*, which is the *influence of the stars*. So true still is that of the *Poet*, *Cælum ipsum petimus stultiitia*; for by what *imaginable influence* come the *stars* to plant opinions in men's *minds* so deeply and *universally*? But yet further, is this *opinion* which is thus caused by the *stars*, *true* or *false*? if the *opinion* be *true*, we have what we desire; if *false*, what *malignant influence* is this of the *stars*, so powerfully to *sway* men to the *belief* of a *falsity*? How far are the *stars* then from doing *good* to mankind, when they are so *influential* to deceive the world; but then, by what *peculiar influence* come some men to be freed from this *general imposture*? If the *cause* be so *universal*, the *effect* must be *universal* too. But if only the *nativity* and *continuance* of some particular *religions* may be *calculated* by the *stars*, (as *Cardan* and *Vaninus*, *atheistically suppose*) whence then comes the *general propensity* and *inclination* to *Religion* in all *ages* and *nations* of the *World*? If it be then caused by the *Heavens* in *general*, it must be produced *necessarily* and *universally*, and so to be an *Atheist*, were *impossible*; if it be caused by the *influence* of some particular *stars*, then when that *influence* ceaseth, the world would *universally relapse* into *Atheism*. So that there is no possible way of *avoiding* this *universal consent* of mankind, as an *argument* that there is a *God*, when all the *pretences* of the *Atheist* against it are so *weak*, *ridiculous* and *impertinent*.

The only thing then left for him, is, to deny the *truth* of the thing, *viz.* that there is such an *universal consent*; because some persons have been found in the world who have not agreed with the rest of mankind in this opinion. To this I answer, (which was the second particular for clearing this argument) that

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that the dissent of these persons is not sufficient to manifest the consent not to be universal, and to arise from a dictate of nature. For I demand of the greatest *Atheist*, Whether it be sufficient to say, that it is not natural for men to have two legs, because some have been born with one, or that it is not natural for men to desire life (which the *Atheist* loves so dearly) because there have been so many who have taken away their own lives? If it be said that these are *Monsters* and *Anomaly's* in nature, and therefore not to be reckoned in the regular account of things, the same I may with as great reason say of *Atheists*, that they are to be disjuncted out of the *Census* of such who act upon free principles of reason; because there may be some peculiar reasons given of their dissent from the rest of mankind in the denial of a *Deity*. We see by the old *Philosophers* how far the affectation of *Novelty*, and ambition of being cried up for no vulgar wits, may carry men to deny such things, which are most common and obvious in the world. Is there any thing more plain and evident to reason, than that it implies a contradiction for the same thing to be and not to be at the same time, and yet if we believe *Aristotle*, who largely disputes against them, εἰς δὲ τινες αὐτοὶ τε ἐνδέχεται εἶναι τὸ αὐτὸ εἶναι καὶ εἶναι. There was some who affirmed that a thing might be and not be at the same time. What so evident in nature as motion, yet the *Philosopher* is well known who disputed against it, and thought himself subtle in doing so too? What are men more assured of, than that they live, and yet (if it be not too dogmatical, even in that to believe the *Scepticks*) it was a thing none could be assured of? What are our senses more assured of than that the snow is white, yet all the *Philosophers* were not of that opinion? Is this then sufficient reason on which to deny an universal consent, because some *Philosophers* opposed it, when it is most undoubtedly true, which *Tully* sharply speaks of the ancient *Philosophers*, Nihil tam absurdum quod non dixerit aliquis Philosophorum; there was no absurdity so great, but it found a *Philosopher* to vouch it: But in this case those *Philosophers* who questioned the existence of a *Deity*, though they were not for number to be compared with those who asserted it, yet were not so inexcusable therein as our modern *Atheists*; because they then knew no other way of Religion, but that which was joyned with horrible superstition, and ridiculous rites of worship; they were

Metaphys.  
lib. 4. cap. 4.

De Nat. Deor.  
lib. 3.



were *strangers* to any *thing* of *divine* revelation, or to any *real* miracles wrought to confirm it, and to such a *way* of *serv*ing *God* which is most agreeable to the *Divine* nature, most suitable to our *reason*, most *effectual* for *advancing* true *goodness* in the *world*. And although this most excellent *Religion*, viz. the *Christian*, be subject to many *scandals* by *reason* of the *corruptions* which have been mixed with it by those who have *professed* it, yet the *Religion* it self is *clear* and *untainted*, being with great *integrity* preserved in the *sacred* records of it. So that now *Atheism* hath far less to plead for it self than it had in the *midst* of the *ignorance* and *superstition* of the *Heathen* *Idolatries*. But if we should grant the *Atheist* more than he can prove, That the number of such who denied a *Deity* hath been great in all *ages* of the *world*; is it *probable* they should speak the *sence* of *nature*, whose *opinion*, if it were embraced, would *dissolve* all *ties* and *obligations* whatsoever; would let the *world* loose to the highest *licentiousness*, without *check* or *contr*oll, and would in time *overturn* all *civil* *Societies*? For as *Tully* hath largely shewn, *Take away the being and providence of God out of the world, and there follows nothing but perturbation and confusion in it, not only all sanctity, piety and devotion is destroyed, but all faith, vertue and humane Societies too*; which are impossible to be upheld without *Religion*, as not only *he*, but *Plato*, *Aristotle* and *Plutarch*, have fully demonstrated. Shall such persons then who hold an *opinion* so *contrary* to all other *dictates* of *nature*, rather *speak* the *sence* of *nature*, than they who have asserted the *Belief* of a *Deity*, which tends so much to *advance* *nature*, to *regulate* the *world*, and to *reform* the *lives* of *men*? Certainly if it were not a *dictate* of *nature* that there was a *God*, it is impossible to conceive the *world* should be so *constant* in the *belief* of *him*, when the *thoughts* of *him* breed so many *anxieties* in *mens* *minds*, and withall, since *God* is neither *obvious* to *sense*, nor his *nature* *comprehensible* by *humane* *reason*. Which is a stronger *evidence* it is a *character* of himself which *God* hath *imprinted* on the *minds* of *men*, which makes them so *unanimously* agree that he *is*, when they can neither *see* *him*, nor yet fully *comprehend* *him*. For any *whole* *Nation*, which have *consented* in the *denial* of a *Deity*, we have no *evidence* at all; some *suspicion* it is true there were at first *concerning* some very *barbarous* people in *America*, but it is since evident,

De Nat. Deor.  
l. 1. & De Legibus, lib. 2.

Addend. ad l. 1.  
De Idol. p. 2.

V. Acoftam. l. 5.  
c. 3.  
Lipf. Monit. &  
exempl. Politic.

Seft. 14.  
2.

though they are groſſy miſtaken as to the *nature* of *God*, yet they *worſhip* ſomething inſtead of him, ſuch as the *Toupinamboults*, *Caribes*, *Patagens*, *Tapuia*, and others; of the laſt of which *Voffius* from one *Chriſtophorus Arciſſewski*, a *Polonian Gentleman*, who was among them, hath given a large account of their *Religion*, and the *manner* of their *worſhipping* of their *gods*, both *good* and *bad*. And that which among theſe *Indians* much confirms our preſent *argument*, is, That only thoſe who have been the moſt *barbarous* and *ſavage Nations*, have been *ſuſpected* of *irreligion*, but the more *civilized* they have been, the more evident their *ſenſe* of *Religion*. The *Peruvians* *worſhip* one chief *God*, whom they call *Virachocha*, and *Pachacamak*, which is as much as the *Creator of Heaven and Earth*. And of the *Religion* of the *Mexicans*, *Lipſius* and others ſpeak. So that the nearer any have approached to *civility* and *knowledge*, the more ready they have been to *own* a *Deity*, and none have had ſo little *ſenſe* of it, as they who are almoſt degenerated to *Brutes*; and whether of theſe two now comes nearer to *reaſon*, let any one who hath it judge.

Another great *evidence*, that *God* hath *imprinted* a *character* or *Idea* of himſelf on the *minds* of men, is, *becauſe ſuch things are contained in this Idea of God, which do neceſſarily imply his exiſtence*. The main force of this *argument* lies in this, *That which we do clearly and diſtinctly perceive to belong to the nature and eſſence of a thing, may be with truth affirmed of the thing*; not that it may be affirmed with truth to belong to the *nature of the thing*, for that were an empty *Tautology*, but it may be affirmed with truth of the *thing its ſelf*, as if I clearly perceive upon exact enquiry, that to be an *animal* doth belong to the *nature of man*, I may with truth affirm that *man is a living creature*; if I find it *demonſtrably true* that a *Triangle* hath *three angles equal to two right ones*, then I may truly affirm it of any *Triangle*; but now we aſſume, that upon the moſt exact ſearch and enquiry, I clearly perceive that neceſſary exiſtence doth immutably belong to the *nature of God*; therefore, I may with as much truth affirm, that *God exiſts*, as that *man is a living creature*; or, a *Triangle* hath *three angles equal to two right ones*. But becauſe many are ſo apt to ſuſpect ſome kind of *Sophiſm* in this *argument*, when it is managed from the *Idea* in mens minds, becauſe that ſeems to imply only an *objective*



*etive reality* in the mind, and that nothing can be thence inferred as to the *existence* of the thing whose *Idea* it is, I therefore shall endeavour to manifest more clearly the force of this argument, by proving severally the *suppositions* which it stands upon, which are these three: 1. *That clear and distinct perception of the mind is the greatest evidence we can have of the truth of any thing.* 2. *That we have this clear perception that necessary existence doth belong to the nature of God.* 3. *That if necessary existence doth belong to God's nature, it unavoidably follows, that he doth exist.* Nothing can be desired more plain or full to demonstrate the force of this argument, than by proving every one of these.

1. *That the greatest evidence we can have of the truth of a thing, is, a clear and distinct perception of it in our minds.* For otherwise the rational faculties of man's soul would be wholly *useless*, as being not fitted for any end at all, if upon a right use of them, men were still liable to be deceived. I grant the *imperfection* of our minds in this present state is very great, which makes us so *obnoxious* to error and mistake; but then that *imperfection* lies in the *proneness* in man's mind to be led by interest and prejudice in the judgment of things; but in such things as are purely *speculative* and *rational*, if the mind cannot be certain it is not deceived in them, it can have no certainty at all of any *mathematical demonstrations*. Now we find in our own minds a clear and convincing evidence in some things, as soon as they are propounded to our understandings, as that a thing can be and not be at the same time; that a non-entity can have no proper attributes; that while I reason and discourse, I am; these are so clear, that no man doth suspect himself deceived at all in them. Besides, if we had no ground of certainty at all in our judging things, to what purpose is there an *Idea* of true and false in our minds, if it be impossible to know the one from the other? But I say not, that in all perceptions of the mind we have certain evidence of truth, but only in such as are clear and distinct; that is, when upon the greatest consideration of the nature of a thing, there appears no ground or reason at all to doubt concerning it; and this must suppose the mind's abstraction wholly from the senses; for we plainly find that while we attend to them, we may judge our selves very certain and yet be deceived, as those who have an *Itterism* in their eyes, may judge with much confidence that

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they see *things* as *clearly* and *distinctly* as any other doth. Besides, there are many things taken for granted by *men*, which have no evidence of *reason* at all in them : Now if men will judge of the truth of *things* by such principles, no wonder if they be *deceived*. But when we speak of *clear* and *distinct* perception, we suppose the *mind* to proceed upon evident principles of *reason*, or to have such notions of *things*, which as far as we can perceive by the *light* of *reason*, do agree with the *natures* of the *things* we apprehend ; if in such things then there be no ground of *certainty*, it is as much as to say, our *faculties* are to no purpose ; which highly reflects either upon *God* or *nature*. It is a noble question as any is in *Philosophy*, What is the certain *revelation* of the truth of things, or what ground of *certainty* the *mind* hath to proceed upon in its judgment of the truth of such objects as are represented to it ? Nothing can render the *Philosophy* of *Epicurus* more justly suspected to any rational and *inquisitive* mind, than his making the *senses* the only certain conveyers of the truth of *things* to the *mind*. The *senses* I grant do not in themselves deceive any, but if I make the *impressions* of *sense* to be the only rule for the *mind* to judge by of the truth of things, I make way for the greatest *impostures*, and the most erring judgments. For if my *mind* affirms every thing to be in its proper *nature* according to that *Idea* which the *imagination* hath received from the *impressions* upon the organs of *sense*, it will be impossible for me ever to understand the right *natures* of *things*. Because the *natures* of *things* may remain the same, when all those *things* in them which affect the organs of *sense* may be altered, and because the various *motion* and *configuration* of the particles of *matter* may make such an impression upon the *senses*, which may cause an *Idea* in us of that in the *things* themselves, which yet may be only in the manner of *sensation* ; as some *Philosophers* suppose it to be in *heat* and *cold*. Now if the *mind* judgeth of the *nature* of *things* according to those *Idea's* which come from the *impressions* made upon the organs of *sense* ; how is it possible it should ever come to a right judgment of the *natures* of things ? So that in reference even to the grossest *material beings*, it must be the perception only of the *mind*, which can truly inform us of their proper *nature* and *essence*. Besides, there are many *Idea's* of *things* in the *mind* of *man* which are capable to have properties demonstrated of them, which ne-



ver owed their original to our senses ; and were never imported to the mind at the *Keys* of the senses. Such are most *Mathematical figures* which have their *peculiar properties* and *demonstrations* ; such are all the *mutual respects* of things to each other, which may be as certain and evident to the mind as its self is ; now it is plain by this, that all certainty of knowledge is not conveyed by the senses ; but our truest way of certain understanding the nature of any thing, is by the clear and distinct perception of the mind, which is founded on the Truth of our faculties ; and that however we may be deceived when we do not make a right use of our reason, because of the imperfection of our present state ; yet if we say our mind may be deceived when things are evident and clear to them upon plain principles of reason, it is highly to reflect upon that God who gave men rational faculties, and made them capable of discerning Truth from falsehood.

2. *That we have clear and distinct perception that necessity of existence doth belong to the nature of God.* For which we are to consider the vast difference which there is in our notion of the nature of God, and of the nature of any other being. In all other beings, I grant we may abstract essence and existence from each other ; now if I can make it appear, that there is evident reason, *ex parte rei*, why I cannot do it in the notion of God, then it will be more plain that necessity of existence doth immutably belong to his nature. It is manifest to our reason, that in all other beings, which we apprehend the natures of, nothing else can be implied in the natures of them beyond bare possibility of existence ; no, although the things which we do apprehend, do really exist, because in forming an Idea of a thing, we abstract from every thing which is not implied in the very nature of the thing : now existence being only contingent and possible, as to any other being, it cannot be any ingredient of its Idea, because it doth not belong to its essence ; for we may fully apprehend the nature of the thing, without attributing existence to it. But now in our conception of a Being, absolutely perfect, bare possibility or contingency of existence speaks a direct repugnancy to the Idea of him ; for how can we conceive, that Being absolutely perfect, which may want that which gives life to all other perfections, which is existence ? The only scruple which mens minds

minds are *subject* to in apprehending the *force* of this *argument* lies in this, Whether this *necessary existence* doth really *belong* to the *nature* of that *being* whose *Idea* it is, or else it be only a *Mode* of our *conception* in apprehending *God*? For clearing of this, we must consider by what *certain rules* we can know when the *composition* of *things* together in the *understanding* doth depend upon the *mere operation* of the *mind*, and when they do *belong* to the *things* themselves and their *immutable nature*. For which we have no *rule* so *certain* and *evident* as this is, that in those *things* which depend *merely* on the *act* of the *mind* joyned together, the *understanding* cannot only *abstract* one *thing* from another, but may really *divide* them in its *conceptions* from each other: but in such *things* which cannot be *divided* from each other, but the *essence* of the *thing* is quite altered, it is a *certain evidence* that those *things* were not *conjoyned* by the *mere act* of the *mind*, but do *immutably belong* to the *natures* of the *things* themselves. As for instance, when I conceive a *Triangle* inscribed in a *square*, a *man walking*, a *horse with wings*, it is evident I may *understand* the *natures* of all these *things* without these *affections* of them, because I can fully apprehend the *nature* of a *Triangle*, without imagining a *square*, a *man* without *walking*, a *horse* without *wings*; thence it necessarily follows, that the *joyning* of these *things* together, was *merely* an *act* of the *mind*; but now I cannot conceive a *Triangle* not to have *three angles equal to two right ones*, nor a *man* that hath not *rationality* belonging to him; for if I divide these *attributes* from them, I destroy their *natures*; and therefore the *joyning* of these together is not any *mere act* of the *mind*; but these are such *things* as are *implied* in the very *notion* of them, and therefore *immutably* belongs to them. So now, when I conceive the *notion* of a *body*, I can imagine all *perfections* belonging to it, without *conceiving* it *necessarily* to exist; for it may be a *body* still, though it hath not its *being* from it *self*; but when I conceive a *Being absolutely perfect*, it is *impossible* to imagine it should have its *being* from any *other*; and if it be from its *self*, it must of *necessity* exist. For though the *mind* still be apt to doubt, whether *existence* in this *Idea* be only a *mode* of *cogitation*; yet that doubt may be easily removed, if the *mind* doth but attend to this, that at least *possibility* of  
existence



existence doth belong to all those *Beings* which we have a clear *Idea* of in our *minds*; and the reason why we attribute bare *possibility* to them, is because we apprehend some *reason* in our *minds* which keeps us from attributing *necessity* of existence to them, as that it is not implied in its *nature*, or that it doth depend on some other *being*, or that it wants *infinite power*, &c. Now all these *reasons* which make us attribute bare *possibility* of existence to any *being*, are taken away when we conceive a *being* absolutely perfect; for then existence is implied among the *number* of *perfections*; and this *being* is independent, upon all others, and *infinitely powerful*; so that nothing can hinder its *existence*; and therefore we must conclude that *necessity* of existence doth immutably belong to the *nature* and *notion* of *God*, and is not any *Mode* only of our conception; because if we take away *necessity* of existence from *God*, we lose the *notion* of a *Being* absolutely perfect.

The third thing, that if necessary existence belongs to the nature of *God*, he doth exist, not only follows as a necessary conclusion from the other two, as the premises, but is in itself evident to any ones *reason*; for it implies no less than a contradiction for a being to exist necessarily, and yet it be questionable, Whether he doth exist or no? Thus much I suppose may suffice here to explain and enforce this argument; if any are yet unsatisfied, I referr them to those judicious Authors, who have made it their peculiar business to manage it, and vindicate it from all objections: which falls in only here as an evidence that *God* hath imprinted a character of himself on the minds of men, seeing we have so clear and distinct an *Idea* of such a *Being*, from whom, if we take away necessity of existence, we destroy that notion which our minds have of an absolutely perfect *Being*. This is the first way whereby we can conceive an *Infinite Being* may make himself known to mankind, by imprinting an *Indelible* character of himself upon the soul, which can be attributed to none besides himself without doing manifest violence to our own faculties, and suspecting our selves deceived in things which are most clear and evident to us.

I come to the second evidence which *God* hath given us of his own existence, which is the mark, and impression which he hath left of an *Infinite Wisdom* and *Counsel* in the appearances which are in nature. There needs no great Criticism to find out

*Vid. Des Cartes Metaphys. Medit. & Resp. ad Object. D.H. More Antidote against Atheism. lib. I. ch. 8. append. ch. 5, 6, 7.*

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out the true *Author* of all the *works* of *nature*; the *works* themselves shew the *Author* as plainly, as if his *effigies* were drawn upon them. If the great *curiosity* and *contrivance* of any *artificial engine* speak the excellency of the *Mechanical wit* of the framer of it ; what ridiculous *folly* will it be to impute that rare *mechanism* of the *works* of *nature* to the blind and fortuitous motion of some particles of *matter* ? Suppose a multitude of letters casually thrown together, should fall so *handsomely* in order, that we might read in them the names of *Troja*, *Juno*, *Aeneas*, *Dido*, *Turnus*, *Ascanius* or the like ; is it possible for any to imagine that ever they should reach the *grandeur*, *style*, *matter* and *accuracy* of the whole books of the *Aeneids* ? So granting, that now *matter* being set in motion by a *divine power*, may by its continual agitation, at last produce some of the appearances of *nature* ; yet what is this to the whole *Universe*, or the admirable *contrivance* of any one part in it ? If these things had been the result of mere *matter* and *motion*, when once the particles of *matter* had been so united and settled together, as to produce any one species of animals in the world (which it is almost unconceivable they should) yet we cannot think that if there had been but symmetry of parts enough for it merely to subsist its self, and propagate more, there could have been any further Attempt made by those *Atoms*, which had been once settled in a determinate figure. How came it then to pass that there is not any one species of animals in the world, but what hath such an order, symmetry and contrivance of parts, which speaks more than mere necessity of subsistence, and therefore speaks them to be the effects of a supreme Governour of the world, and not the products of mere matter ? Is it possible that any, who is not before-hand resolved to exclude a *Deity*, should imagine that any particles of matter should fall into the exact form, order, motion, and serviceableness to the world which the Heavenly bodies are in, without divine counsel and wisdom disposing of them ? Tully tells us of a speech of Aristotle to this purpose ; If we could suppose persons to have lived in some caverns of the earth, and to have enjoyed every thing there of pleasure, and riches, or whatever it is which we think makes mens lives happy, and had never been abroad upon the surface of the earth, but had only had some obscure report of

De Nat. Deor.  
l. 2. c. 95.



an infinite Power and Being ; and that afterwards these persons should by an opening of the caverns wherein they were, come abroad into these parts of the world, and should suddenly behold the Earth, Sea, and the Heavens, and observe the vastness of the clouds, and violence of winds, and behold the bigness, beauty, and influence of the Sun , and how the day depended upon his presence , and upon his withdrawing should view the face of the Heavens again (as it were the second course of nature) the order and ornament of the Stars, the varieties of the light of the Moon, their rising and setting, and their fixed and immoveable courses, they could not hold from believing there was a Deity, and that these were the effects of his power. So vastly different are the free and natural emanations of our souls, from that which we force and strain out of our selves by distorting and wringing those free principles of reason which God hath given us. When a few sorry experiments and some arbitrary hypotheses, must make us form other conceptions of things, than the majesty, order and beauty of them do naturally suggest to us : We see when once we can but abstract our minds from those prejudices which continual conversation with the world brings upon us, by that speech of Aristotle, how readily our minds will frame an excellent commentary upon those words of the royal Psalmist , *The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament shews his handy-work.* To which purpose likewise those words of the excellent Orator himself in another place are very observable ; *Quid est enim verius quam neminem esse oportere tam stulte arrogantem, ut in se mentem & rationem putet inesse, in cælo mundoque non putet ? aut ea quæ vix summa ingenii ratione comprehendat , nulla ratione moveri putet ? quem vero astrorum ordines, quem dierum nocturnique vicissitudines, quem mensum temperatio, quemque ea quæ gignuntur nobis ad fruendum, non gratum esse cogant, hunc hominem omnino numerare qui dicet ? What monstrous arrogancy would it be in any man to think there is a mind and reason in himself, and that there is none in the world ? Or to think those things are moved without reason and understanding, which all that he hath is scarce able to comprehend ? Neither can he deserve the name of a man, from whom the observation of the courses of the stars, the succession and order of seasons, and the innumerable benefits which he enjoys in the world, does not extort gratitude towards*

*De Legibus, l. 2.*

that Being which ordered all these things. What a low opinion then had those more refined and generous spirits who went only upon principles of pure and undistorted reason, of those mean and ignoble souls, which were inclined to Atheism; especially then, when Religion was so abused, that it was true of the wisest of them, what one said of Erasmus, *Magis habuit quid fugeret quam quid sequeretur*, they knew what to avoid, but not what they should embrace: And yet when they saw so much into the folly and superstition of Heathen worship, they saw the greatest reason still to adhere to the belief of a Deity, as may be clearly seen, especially in the second of those excellent Dialogues of Tully, *De Natura Deorum*. Where this particular argument to prove a Deity from the admirable contrivance of the works of nature, is managed with a great deal of eloquence and reason, and by particular enumeration of most considerable parts of the Universe. So unbecoming a late Philosopher was that reason of his, why he waved the argument from the consideration of the world, to infer a Deity, because the ends of God are unsearchable, as flowing from his Infinite wisdom. For, what though God may conceal some things from men, which he intends, and are of no concernment for man to know, must therefore of necessity those ends of his be unsearchable in his works of Creation, which refer so immediately to the advantage of life, and tend so much to the veneration of the Deity?

Sect. 16.

Nay, the peculiar use and serviceableness of many parts of the Universe, especially of Animals, and chiefly of man, is so evident, that this hath been the main argument which hath induced some, otherwise atheistical enough, to acknowledge and adore a Deity. And although the Epicureans be lamentably puzzled to give any tolerable account of many other appearances in nature, yet they no where discover so much weakness and ignorance, as when they come to discourse *De usu partium*, about the contrivance of the parts of man's body. Whose opinion is thus briefly delivered by Lucretius;

Lucret. l. 4.

*Nil ideo quoniam natum est in corpore ut uti  
Possemus; sed quod natum est id procreat usum.*

i.e. that no parts of man's body were designed for that use which they are employed for, but the parts by chance fell into that form  
they



they are in, and men by degrees brought them to their present use and serviceableness. An opinion at first view so strangely unreasonable, that we cannot think *Epicurus* should have ever embraced it, had it not unavoidably followed upon his hypothesis of all things in the Universe resulting only from a fortuitous concurrence of atoms: According to which he supposed in man a different configuration of parts would happen from the various agitation and concretion of those little particles which at first run together in the fashion of a man; and because that man had in him a more florid and vivacious spirit, made up of the most subtile and movable atoms, thence motion came into the several parts suitable to the different conformation of them. And because those atoms of which the soul is composed, are capable of sensation, thence it comes to pass, that it sees in the eye, hears in the ear, and smells in the nostrils. This is the most which is made of the opinion of *Epicurus* by the late sedulous Vindicator of him, which yet himself calls *intoleranda opinio*; and it will appear to be so, not only as contradicting, what God himself hath delivered concerning man, but what reason it self will easily suggest from the consideration of the several parts of man's body. It must be confessed there were some Philosophers elder than *Epicurus*, who were much inclined to this opinion, as *Democritus*, *Empedocles*, *Anaxagoras*, and others; yet we find those who more narrowly searched into the natures of living creatures, were thereby brought to acknowledge a divine providence, which with a great deal of wisdom did order the several parts of animals, and adapted them to their peculiar uses. And although *Aristotle* in his books *de partibus animalium*, hath said enough to refute the fond opinion of those Philosophers; yet none hath handled this argument with more exactness and accuracy, and with a more peculiar reflection on *Epicurus*, than *Galen* hath done in his excellent piece *De usu partium*. Which *Gassendus* thinks *Galen* writ with a kind of Enthusiasm upon him (*adeo totum opus videtur conscriptum ενθουσιασμού*) and so that all those seventeen books of his on that subject, are a kind of 119th Psalm in Philosophy, or a perpetual Hymn upon the praise of the great Creator, a just Commentary on those words of the Psalmist, Psal. 139. 14. *I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my Soul knoweth right well.*

*Gassendus* To. 2.  
lib. 2. sect. 3.

In the entrance of those *Books*, *Galen* first shews the great variety of parts which is in several animals suitable to their several natures; the *horse* because of his swiftness and pride, hath the strongest hoofs and most curled main; the *Lion* because of his fierceness and courage hath his strength lying in his teeth and paws; the *Bull* in his horns; the *Boar* in his tusks; the *Hart* and *Hare* being timorous creatures, their parts are made fittest for flight: but *man* because he hath a principle of reason in him, hath no defensive or offensive weapons in his body, but he hath hands to make use of both; which being joyned with, and imployed by his reason, far exceed all those advantages which any other creatures have, being imployed not only to defend himself, but to build houses, make cloaths, arms, nets, what-ever is usefull for himself, or hurtfull to those creatures which he hath command over; but because *man* was made for society and civil converse, therefore his hands were not only imployed to defend himself or hurt other creatures, but for the mutual benefit and advantage of mankind; for by these were *Laws* written, *Temples* built, all instruments of *Arts* framed; by them we enjoy the benefit of others wits, we can discourse with *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Hippocrates*, and other ancients, though at such a distance from us. Now that the configuration of parts is not the cause of the use of them afterwards; as the *Lion's* paw of his courage, the *Bull's* horns of his fierceness, or the slenderness of the *Hart* of its fearfulness; appears by this, because the young ones of the several kinds of animals, before their parts are grown up, strive to make the same use of them which the others doe. As *Galen* saith, he had often seen a *Bull-calf* pushing with his head before any horns were grown out, and a *Colt* kicking when his hoofs were yet tender, and a young *Boar* defending himself with his jaws before he had any tusks, which is an evident argument that the parts were designed for the use, and not the use to follow the parts. So, saith he, take three Eggs, one of an Eagle, another of a Duck, and a third of a Serpent, and after they are hatched through a moderate heat, we shall find when they are but newly hatched, the two first will be striving to fly before they have wings, and the third endeavouring to creep away on its belly; and if you breed them up to greater perfection, and bring them into the open Air, you will presently see the young Eagle mounting into  
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*the Air, the Duck quodding into a pool, and the Serpent creep under ground.* Afterwards he comes particularly to handle the several parts of man's body, and first begins with the *Hand*, and shews in each part that it were *impossible* to have framed them with greater *conveniency* for their several *uses* than they have. The *use* of the *hand* is to take hold of any thing which man can use; now there being *things* of such *different sizes* which men may use, it had been *impossible* for the *hand*, if it had been one entire thing, and undivided, that it could have held *things* greater or lesser than its self, but it must have been equal to it. But now as the *fingers* are placed and divided, they are equally fit for laying hold of *objects* of any size or quantity; For the least *things* as a Barley Corn, are taken up with the *fore-finger* and the *thumb*, things somewhat bigger are taken up by the *same*, but not by the *extremities* of them as before; things somewhat bigger than these, with the *thumb*, *fore-finger* and *middle-finger*, and so on by degrees, till at last the whole *hand* is used; so that the *division* of the *hand* into *fingers* is necessary. Neither were this enough, but the very *position* of the *fingers* as they are, is necessary too; for they had been *useless* if they had been all divided in a *right line*; for the firmest hold is either *circular*, or at least in two opposite points; but now this is provided for, by the *position* of the *thumb*, which may equally joyn with any of the *fingers* in taking hold of any thing. After this, he largely shews the particular necessity of the *softness*, *roundness* of the *flesh*, and *nails* on the *tops* of the *fingers*; and the special *usefulness* of these; and then comes to the *bones* of the *fingers*, how necessary they are for *firm-hold*, and if there had been but one *bone* in each *finger*, they would have served only for those *things* which we take up when they are extended; but now seeing they have *three* several *joynts*, they are fitted for all *kinds* of things; for when we *bow* our *fingers*, we use them as though they had no *bones* at all, and when we *stretch* them out, as though they were all but one entire *bone*; and the several *inflections* of the *joynts* serve for all *kind* of *figures*: and then he shews the necessity of the *flesh* within the *fingers*, and on either *side* of them, and upon them; and so with wonderful accuracy handles the *magnitude*, *number*, *figure* of the *bones*, and *nature* of the *joynts* of the *fingers*, and then the

*tendons.*

tendons and muscles belonging to the several fingers, which after he hath discoursed on through his *first Book*, he concludes it with the manifest inconveniency which would follow in the hand, were not every thing in it in that exact magnitude, position, and figure in which it is. With the same exactness he goes through all the parts of the body, handling in the *second Book* all that belongs to the arm, in the *third* the legs, in the *fourth* and *fifth* the Organs of nutrition, in the *sixth* and *seventh* the lungs, in the *eighth* and *ninth* the Head, in the *tenth* the peculiar and admirable fabrick of the eyes, in the *eleventh* the other parts of the face, in the *twelfth* the parts of the back, and so in the *thirteenth*, in the *fourteenth* and *fifteenth* the genitals, in the *sixteenth* the arteries, veins, and nerves, and in the last the peculiar disposition and figure of all these parts, and the usefulness of the whole design: Which is as great as can be in any work whatsoever, which is for us to take notice of the admirable wisdom of God in contriving the several parts of the body of man: So that, that whole book contains in it a most full and pregnant demonstration of a Deity, which every man carries about with him in the structure of his body, on which account men need not go out of themselves to find proof of a Deity, whether they consider their minds or their bodies, of which it may be more truly said than *Heraclitus* of old did of his *Stove*, *Etiam hic Dii sunt*. So that of all persons, I should most wonder at those whose employment particularly leads them to the understanding the parts and nature of man's body, if the proverb be not a great injury to them, since they have fuller insight into this demonstration of a Deity in the Fabrick of mans body, than many others who converse only with some jejune and sapless writings. And certainly, whatever is imagined to the contrary by men of weak understandings, the best way to cure the world of Atheism, is true Philosophy, or a search into the natures of things; which the more deep and profound it is, the more impossible will it be found to explicate all the phenomena of nature by mere matter and motion. It was wisely observed of a great person and Philosopher, that a narrow and slight inspection into nature, inclined men of weak heads to Atheism; but a more thorow-insight into the causes of things, made them more evidently see the necessary dependance of things on the

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*Aristot. de part.  
Anim. l. 1.*



great and wise Creator of them. A little knowledge of Philosophy is apt to make mens heads dizzy, and then in danger of falling into the gulf of *Atheism*; but a more careful and diligent view of it, brings them into sobriety and their right wits again. Such a slight inspection had the followers of *Epicurus* into the nature of things; for when they found how in the present state of the world the various motion and configuration of the particles of matter would handsomely salve many appearances of nature, they, drunk with the success, reel presently into an Infinite space, and there imagine they behold infinite worlds made of the concretion of *Atoms*, and ever since their eyes have been so dusted with these little *Atoms*, that they could see nothing else in the world but them. Which how gross and unreasonable it is, will appear from our present subject; for who but *Lucretius* or *Epicurus* could ever think that our nostrils were at first fashioned as they are merely by the violent impulse of the air within, which would force it self a passage out? But how came the air into the body before it was forced out? did it first break open the lips, make all that round cavity in the mouth, for a passage through the *aspera arteria*? but if when it was in, it would come out again, was not the mouth wide enough to let it go? or did the first man shut his mouth on purpose to find another vent for the air? if so, how chance the force of the air did not carry away the *epiglottis*? or if it got safely up to the nose, how came it not to force a passage out about the eyes rather than to go down so low first? But if we believe these rare contrivers of man's body, all the inward vessels of the body were made by the course of water, as channels are; but how is it possible, to imagine that the *Oesophagus* and the stomach should be so curiously contrived by the mere force of water? and that all the *Intestines* should be made only as channels to let it out again when it was once in? but how comes then such a kind of reciprocation and *Peristaltick* motion in those vessels? how come the several coats of them to be so firm? if it had been only a forced passage, it would have been direct and through the substance of the parts, as we find it to be in all forced passages in the body of the earth. Besides, if the water received into the stomach forced the passage through the guts, how comes it not to run in the channel it had made for it self? or did it not like that passage when

when other *things* came into it, and therefore found out a more *secret* one into the *bladder* ? but if that were made by the *water*, how came it to be so full of *membranes*, and so *subject* to *dilatation* ? Thus *ridiculous* will men make themselves, rather than *shew* themselves *men* in *owning* and *adoring* that *infinitely wise* and *powerful* *God*, who *orders* all *things* in the *world* according to the *counsel* of his *Will*. What can be more *plain* and *evident* than the *peculiar usefulness* of the *several parts* of *mans body* is ? What other *intent* can be imagined that *man* is *formed* with a *mouth*, but only for *taking* in of *nourishment*, and for *receiving* and *letting forth* of *air* ? or that an *infant* is so ready to *open* his *mouth*, but that there are *breasts* and *milk* for him to *suck* in order to his *nourishment* ? Why should the *Oesophagus* be so *hollow* and the *stomach* so *wide*, but that *one* was provided for the better *conveyance* of the *meat* down, and the other for the *fermentation* of it ? Whence come all the other *vessels* to be so *conveniently* placed, were it not for the *distribution* of *nourishment* into the *several parts*, or for *conveying* away the *excrements* of it ? Can any one think that the *several muscles* and *tendons* should be placed in the more *solid parts* for any other end than for the better *motion* of them ? or that the *nerves* should be derived from the *brain* into the *several parts* of the *body* for any other *design* than to be the *instruments* of *sense* and *motion* ? or that the *continual motion* of the *heart* should be for any other *purpose*, than for *receiving* and *distribution* of the *blood* through the *arteries* into the *parts* of the *body* ? or that the *eye* with all its *curious fabrick* should be only *accidentally* *employed* in *seeing* ? These things are so *plain*, that however the *Epicureans* may more easily *lose* themselves and *deceive* others in *explaining* the *appearances* of *nature* in some *inanimate beings*, yet when they come with their *blind course* of *Atoms* to give an *account* of the *parts* of *animals*, they miserably *befoo* themselves and *expose* themselves only to *contempt* and *pity*. It were *easy* to multiply *examples* in this *kind*, but I shall only mention one thing more, which is, if all the *parts* of *mans body* have no higher *original* than the *course* of *Atoms* in the first *man* and *woman*, by what were the *umbilical vessels* formed whereby the *Child* in the *womb* receives its *nourishment* ? by what *Atoms* was the passage of  
the



the *succus nutritius* framed from the *Mother* to the *Child*? how come those *vessels* to close up so naturally upon the birth of the *Child* and it to seek its nourishment in quite another way? Will the *particles* of *matter* which by their concretion formed the first pair, save this too? Thus still we see how impossible it is (to go no further than our *selves*) to give any tolerable account of things without an *infinite power* and *Being* which produced all these things, and hath left so plain an inscription of *himself* upon the works of *nature*, that none but those who shut their eyes can abstain from seeing it.

I come now to the third evidence of a *Deity*, which is, that there are some beings in the world which cannot depend upon matter or motion, i. e. that there are some spiritual and immaterial Substances or Beings (for if the thing be acknowledged, it is unbecoming a man to contend about words) the consequence of this for the proving a *Deity*, neither hath been nor I suppose will be denied by such who question an infinite Being, the same principles leading to the denying and the proof of both, and immaterial Beings being the strongest proof that there is something above matter in the world. If there be then such things in the World which matter and motion cannot be the causes of, then there are certainly spiritual and immaterial Beings, and that I shall make appear both as to the minds of men, and some extraordinary effects which are produced in the world.

I. I begin with the nature of the soul of man. And herein I must confine my self to those arguments which directly prove my present purpose, and on that account must quit all those common arguments to prove the soul's immortality from the attributes of God; for all these do suppose the existence of a *Deity* as already evident; neither can I rely with safety on the way which some have taken to prove the immortality of the soul merely from the phenomena of sensation, which they endeavour to prove cannot be performed by mere matter and motion; for granting all this, yet the utmost that can be proved by it is no greater immortality in our souls than in the souls of Brutes; and in the sense in which that is admitted, I suppose an Epicurean will not deny the soul of man, to be immortal as Demonax in Lucian said, when he was asked whether the soul were immortal or no, it is (said he) but as

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all

Sect. 17.

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*all things else are; for those who make the soul to be nothing but some more subtle and active particles of matter, do not think that upon death they are annihilated, but that only they are dispersed and dissipated, or in the Platonists phrase, may return to the soul of the world. These ways I cannot think to be sufficient probations of such a spiritual and immaterial Being in man which we now enquire for, much less can I make use of so precarious and infirm an hypothesis as præ-existence, which makes men apt to suspect the agency of such reasons which tend to prove the immortality of the soul, which are linked with a supposition, not only inevident either to sense or reason, but likewise needless and impertinent. For I know no one argument which doth directly prove the immateriality of the soul, that doth in the least inserr any necessity of præ-existence, but on the same accounts it will prove the soul's eternity. Being therefore thus at liberty to enquire into the nature of the soul considered in her self, our only way must be to find out such peculiar properties in the soul of man, which cannot be salv'd on supposition, there were nothing else but matter and motion in the world. Supposing then that all sensation in man doth arise from corporeal motion, which is so strongly asserted by the modern Philosophers, and that the highest conceptions which depend on sense can amount no higher than imagination, which is evident; if it can then be proved that there is a principle of action in man which proceeds in a different way of operation than sensation doth, and that there are such operations of the soul which are not imaginations, it will be then clear that there is a principle in man higher than matter and motion. Now although it be a task sufficiently difficult to explain the manner of sensation it self in a mere mechanical way, supposing no higher principle than mere matter, yet it will appear far more difficult, nay impossible without a spiritual or immaterial Being to salve such appearances in man which transcend the power of imagination; which will appear by these following operations of the mind which every one who hath it, may find within himself.*

I. *Correcting the errors of imagination. For if all our perceptions were nothing else but the images of corporeal things left in the brain, the judgment of the mind must of necessity be according to the impressions, which are made upon the*

*Organs*



*Organs of sense.* But now if our minds can and do form apprehensions of things quite different from those which are conveyed by sense, there must be a higher principle of knowledge in man than imagination is. For which the common instance of the just magnitude of the Sun is very plain; If we judge according to the image which is conveyed to the brain by our eyes, we can never imagine the Sun to be bigger than he seems to us to be? nay though the sight be advantaged by the help of Telescopes, it cannot receive such an Image or Idea of the Sun which answers to its just magnitude, viz. that it is 160 times bigger than the Earth. From whence now comes this apprehension of the bigness of the Sun above that proportion which can possibly come in at our senses? If it be said, that by the observation of the lessening of objects according to the proportion of distance, the mind may come to understand how much bigger the Sun may be than he seems, I grant it, but withal enquire how the imagination comes to have proportions and distances which are mere respects, and can have no corporeal phantasms whereby to be represented to it; so that by this very way of ratiocination it is evident, that there is some principle in man beyond imagination. Again, when the mind by ratiocination hath proceeded thus far and finds the Sun to be so great, what Idea is there of this magnitude in the mind? the mind cannot fix it self on any thing but it must have an Idea of it; from whence comes this Idea? not from corporeal phantasms; for none of them could ever convey the due magnitude of the Sun to the mind, and therefore the forming of this Idea must be a pure act of Intellection which corrects the errors of imagination, and is a principle above it. So in the sight of a stick, when under water, the representation of it by the sense to imagination is as crooked; for corporeal motion carries things to the eye, without any judgment upon them; the eye conveys the image to the brain; and according to the rules of corporeal perception must presently take every thing for true which is conveyed thither; now from what principle is it that this error of our senses is corrected? So in many other things wherein our imaginations are quite puzzled, and when we go according to them, it is impossible to apprehend things as our reason tells us they are; thus as to the Antipodes our imaginations are wholly of the mind of the ancients,

that the *Antipodes* to us must needs be in *danger* of knocking their *heads* against the *Stars*, and if they go upon any thing, it must be their *heads*, and that that part of the *Heavens* which is in the other *Hemisphere* is below us; these are *pertinacious errors* of *imagination* while we *adhere* to that, and are only *corrigible* by our *reason*, which makes it *evident* to be otherwise. Besides, there are many *things* our *reason* and *understanding* *inform* us that they may be, and yet our *imaginations* can form no *Idea* of them; let an *Epicurean* Philosopher try the power of his *imagination* in his *Inane* or *Infinite empty space*, and he will soon find, that as strong as his *Phancy* is, it will soon tire and retreat as not being able to *course* through so *unimaginable* a *Space*. So for *eternal duration* our *reason* tells us the thing is possible, but when our *imaginations* begin to *fradle* up some *conceptions* of it, they are presently *tying* both *ends* together; which will make a *strange Idea* of *eternity*; the case is the same in the *infinite divisibility* of *quantity*, which *Epicurus* was somewhat *aware* of when he *denied* the thing. But how many *Mathematical Problems* are there which will *jade* our *imaginations* presently, and yet our *reason* stands still and *assures* us of the *possibility* of the things, as in *two lines* coming nearer still to each other, and yet never meeting, and in many other things, which most clearly evidence that there is a higher *faculty* in *man* which exceeds *matter* and *motion*, when it is able thus to correct the *faults* and to supply the *defects* of *imagination*.

Seet. 18.

2. *Reflex acts* of the mind upon it self, argue a higher principle than *imagination*. That there are such things are evident to any one who hath any use of *cogitation*; and if any one doubt of it, his very *doubting* argues he hath *reflex acts*; for he could not doubt whether he had or no, but by *reflection* upon himself. Now that *reflex acts* should be caused through *matter* and *motion*, or through mere *imagination* is *unconceivable*. For we see no *matter* can act upon it self; indeed one part of *extended matter* may act upon another, but not purely upon it self; the *extremities* of the *fingers* can never feel themselves, though they may touch each other; neither can *imagination* reflect on it self; for that proceeding upon *corporeal images*, must have such a *representation* from the *senses* of what it acts upon;

now



now what *image* of it *self* can be conveyed to the *imagination* through the external organs of *sense*? The eye may see through the motion of the objects of sight pressing upon it; but how can it see that it sees? so the *imagination* receives the images conveyed to the brain; but what shop hath it to make new ones in of it *self*, and so be guilty of the greatest Idolatry of worshipping its own Image? But though the *imagination* cannot thus reflect, yet we find such a principle within us that is very apt to retire into it *self*, and recollect things which could never have been conserved so long in that shop of shadows, the *Imagination*. For if *imagination* be nothing else but as a modern Philosopher defines it, *conception remaining, and a little and little decaying from and after the act of sense, like the motion of water after a stone is thrown into it*, how is it possible that at so great a distance of years, as we commonly find, the image of a thing may be retrieved with as much facility and freshness as to circumstances, as if it were but new done? and that account which he gives of remembrance is very weak and insufficient, when he tells us, that remembrance is nothing else but the missing of parts, which every man expecteth should succeed after they have a conception of the whole. For according to this, it is impossible for the men to retrieve any object without mutilation of it; and so there cannot possibly be a recollecting of all circumstances, when an object is once passed, and the motion begins to decay. But all this while, we understand nothing by what means this decaying motion should continue so long as our memory can fetch things back, or by what means an object when once passed, can be recovered again, if memory be nothing else but decaying motion. Such perplexities must needs arise, when men will undertake to save the inward operations of the soul by mere motion; but is it not evident that many times when the mind is employed about other things, some phantasms of things long ago past will come and present themselves to the mind with as much clearness as if new done? whereas if memory were decaying motion, the longer past, the more impossible would it be to recover any thing; but, do we not find that many old men will better remember the circumstances of many things they did in their Child-hood than a year or two before? Besides, we see what quickness and vivacity there is in our intellectual faculties above corporeal motion, with what facility the mind

Hobs *Humane Nature*, ch. 3. sect. 1.

mind turns it self from one *object* to another, how suddenly it *rangeth* the whole *world*, how it *trips* over *mountains*, *crosseth* the *ocean*, *mounts* to the *skies*, and at last *quarries* upon it self, and all in the *twinkling* of an *intellectual eye*? As quick as the eye of the *body* is, the *mind* far exceeds it, and can withdraw the *imagination* from attending the *organs* of *sense*, thus do men who have their *minds* much *fixed*, *fix* their eyes too; and yet afterwards can scarce tell *themselves* what they have looked on all that while. Sometimes the *mind* fits and *compares* *phantasms* together, and *sports* it self in *sorting* them into several *ranks* and *orders*, and making *matches* between such *things* which are sure to have no *affinity* with each other, which are thence called *entia rationis*, or the *creatures* of the *mind*. And can all these and many other such *operations* which men are *conscious* to themselves of, be nothing else but the *motion* of some *flegmatick matter*, the *reaction* of the *brain*, and the mere *effects* of *Imagination*?

3. The profound *speculations* of the *mind* argue a *power* far above *imagination* and *corporeal motion*. I wonder how *Epicurus* his *soul*, when, if we believe him, it was made up of *Atoms*, could ever imagine an *Infinite Vacuity*? Could mere *Atoms* ever *dispute* whether they were *Atoms* or no? For I doubt not but *Epicurus* was fain to argue much against himself, before he could persuade himself to so *stupendious* a piece of *folly*? Were there nothing in man but mere *corporeal motion*, whence came the *dispute*, whether the *soul* were *corporeal* or no? Can *Atoms* frame *Syllogisms* in *mood* and *figure*? and mere *matter* argue *pro* and *con*, whether it be *matter* or something else? What kind of *aereal particles* were their *souls* compounded of, who first *fancied* themselves to be *immaterial*? What strange *agitations* of *matter* were those which first made men think of an *eternal state*? which *thoughts* have ever since *stuck* upon these little *spherical bodies*, that they could never yet *disburthen* themselves of them: Whence come such *amazing fears*, such *dreadfull apprehensions*, such *sinking thoughts* of their *future condition* in *minds* that would fain ease themselves by *believing*, that *death* would put a *period* both to *soul* and *body*? Whence on the other side come such *encouraging hopes*, such *confident expectations*, such *comfortable prepossessions* of their *future state*, in the *souls* of good men, when their  
bodies



bodies are nearest to the grave? *Seneca*, who was somewhat dubious sometimes as to the future condition of the soul, yet could tell his dear *Lucilius* with what pleasure he could think of it; and could elsewhere say of the soul, *Et hoc habet argumentum divinitatis suæ quod illum divina delectant, nec ut alienis inter-* *Pres. ad Quæst. Natur.* *est sed ut suis: the soul had that mark of Divinity in it, that it was most pleased with Divine speculations, and conversed with them as with matters which nearly concerned it.* And when it hath once viewed the dimensions of the Heavens, contemnit domicilii prioris angustias, it was ashamed of the cottage it dwelt in; nay, were it not for these speculations, non fuerat operæ pretium nasci, it had not been worth while for the soul to have been in the body; and as he goes on, detrabe hoc inestimabile bonum, non est vita tanti ut sudem, ut æstuem. Could there be now so great an Epicurism in contemplation, were the soul of man of Epicurus his mould, a mere complexión of Atoms? would dull and heavy matter ever have delighted to have searched so much into the causes of things, to have gone over the world in its speculations, and found more sweetness in knowledge, than the little Epicure, the Bee, tastes in his choicest flowers? Epicurus his own Philosophy is a demonstration against himself; if his soul had not been of a purer nature than he fancied, he would never have made his study of Philosophy a part of his Epicurism? had his soul been such Atoms as he fancied, when his brain had been well heated at his study, those more vivid and spirituous particles, like the spirits of wine, had been in danger of evaporation, and leaving the more lumpish matter to complete his work. Of all persons, I most admire that Philosophers, who make so much use of their understandings, should so ungratefully requite them, and serve them like old horses, when they have made them doe all the service they could, turn them into the high-ways, and let them die in a ditch. But yet all Philosophers have not been so unthankfull, some have understood the worth of their soul, and asserted it, if they have not used too high, i. e. Platonical expressions of it, making it a particle, not of matter, but of the Divine nature it self, a little Deity in a Cottage, that stays here a-while, and returns to that upper Region from whence it came. As *Manilius* speaks,

Mam. l. 4.

*An dubium est habitare Deum sub pectore nostro,  
In cælumque redire animas, cæloque venire ?*

And while the *soul* is here in its *cage*, it is continually *fluttering up and down*, and delighteth to look out now at this *part*, and then at another, to take a *view* by degrees of the *whole Universe*, as the same *Poet* goes on,

*Quid mirum noscere mundum  
Si possunt homines, quibus est & mundus in ipsis :  
Exemplumque Dei quisque est in imagine parva ?*

The *soul* hath nothing more *delightfull* to it than *knowledge*, and no *knowledge* so *pleasing* and *satisfactory* as of him whose *image* and *superscription* it bears, who makes himself most *known* to such as *enquire* after him ;

*Seque ipsum inculcat & offert  
Ut bene cognosci possit.*

I conclude this with that of *Seneca*, in that excellent *Preface* to his natural questions, *O quam contempta res est homo nisi supra humana se erexerit ! what a pitifull thing is man, were it not that his soul was apt to soar above these earthly things ?* And by this aptness to *soar* so high above these *terrene objects*, and to converse with so much freedom with *spiritual Beings*, as well as *abstracted notions*, we may certainly *infern* that our *rational souls* are of a far more noble and refined nature, than that more *feculent principle* of *imagination* which always *converses* in *face Romuli*, and can go no further than our *senses* carry it. And thus I have made good the first proof, that there is something above *matter* and *motion* in the *world*, which is from that *immaterial Being* which is in man.

Sect. 19.

2.

The next *evidence* which we have of a *Being* above *matter* and *motion*, is, from the extraordinary *effects* which have been in *nature*. I speak not now merely of such *things* which by their *natures* and *effects* are manifested to proceed from some *Beings* which bear ill-will to *mankind*, *multitudes* of which are related by men *philosophical* and *inquisitive*, with such

enume-



enumerations of circumstances, and particular evidences, that they are not mere impostures, that one may on the same grounds question any matter of fact which himself did not see, as such relations which are delivered by persons without interest or design, and such as were able to judge of the truth of circumstances; such are both ancient and modern Philosophers, Physicians, States men, and others. Neither shall I insist on such prodigies, which oft-times presage revolutions in States, if we believe Machiavel himself, who in a whole chapter designedly proves it; and professeth himself utterly to seek for the causes of them, unless they may be attributed to some spirits and intelligences in the air which give the world notice of such things to come. But those things which I suppose have the most clear and undoubted evidence of true and undoubted miracles (the matters of fact being affirmed by eye-witnesses, who sealed the truth of them with their lives) are those recorded in the holy Scriptures; which there are only two ways to evade, either by questioning the truth of the things, which I suppose in the precedent book we have proved with as much rational evidence as any thing of that nature is capable of, or else that the things therein recorded might be salv'd without a Deity. For which only two ways have been excogitated by Atheistical spirits, either attributing them to the power and influence of the Stars, the foundations of which fond and absurd opinion have been taken away by those many Writers, who have rationally confuted the whole Art of Judicial Astrology, or else that they are done by the mere power of imagination, which is the way of Avicenna and some other Arabick Writers, which is so wild an effect of the power of imagination, that nothing doth so much demonstrate the irregular motions of it, as such an opinion doth; and is sufficiently derided and refuted by Pomponatius himself. Now then, it being an acknowledged principle in nature, that every thing continues in the course it is in, till something more powerfull put it out, if then such things have been in the world, which have been real alterations of the course of nature, as the Suns standing still in the time of Joshua, then there must be something above matter and motion, and consequently that there is a God.

*Disput. l. i. c. 56.*

*V. D. H. More's  
Mystery of  
Godliness, l. 7.  
c. 14, 15, 16, 17.*

## C H A P. II.

## Of the Origin of the Universe.

*The necessity of the belief of the Creation of the world in order to the truth of Religion. Of the several Hypotheses of the Philosophers who contradict Moses: with a particular examination of them. The ancient tradition of the world consonant to Moses; proved from the Ionick Philosophy of Thales, and the Italic of Pythagoras. The Pythagorick Cabala rather Egyptian than Mosaick. Of the fluid matter, which was the material principle of the Universe. Of the Hypothesis of the eternity of the world asserted by Ocellus Lucanus and Aristotle. The weakness of the foundations on which that opinion is built. Of the manner of forming principles of Philosophy. The possibility of creation proved. No arguing from the present state of the world against its beginning, shewed from Maimonides. The Platonists arguments from the goodness of God for the eternity of the world, answered. Of the Stoical Hypothesis of the eternity of matter; whether reconcilable with the Text of Moses. Of the Opinions of Plato and Pythagoras concerning the præ-existence of matter to the formation of the world. The contradiction of the eternity of matter to the nature and attributes of God. Of the Atomical Hypothesis of the Origin of the Universe. The world could not be produced by a casual concurrence of Atoms proved from the nature and motion of Epicurus his Atoms, and the Phænomena of the Universe, especially the production and nature of Animals. Of the Cartesian Hypothesis, that it cannot salve the Origin of the Universe without a Deity giving motion to matter.*

## SECT. I.

**T**HE Foundations of Religion being thus established in the Being of God, and the Immortality of the Soul, we now come to erect our superstructure upon them, by asserting the undoubted truth and certainty of that account of the world which is given us in the writings of Moses. Which beginning with the world it self, leads us to a particular consideration  
of



of the *Origin of the Universe*, the right understanding of which hath very great influence upon our *belief* of all that follows in the *Word of God*. For although we should assert with *Epicurus* the *Being* of a *Deity*, if yet with him we add that the *world* was made by a *casual concurrence* of *Atoms*, all that part of *Religion* which lies in obedience to the *Will of God* is unavoidably destroyed. All that is left, is only a kind of *Veneration* of a *Being* more excellent than our own, which reacheth not to the *government* of *men's lives*, and so will have no force at all upon the generality of the world, who are only *allured* by *hopes* or *awed* by *fears*, to that which of their *choice* they would be glad to be freed from. Besides, What *expressions* of *gratitude* can be left to *God* for his *goodness*, if he interpose not in the *affairs* of the *world*? What *dependence* can there be on *divine goodness*, if it be not at all manifested in the world? What *apprehensions* can we have of *God's infinite wisdom* and *power*, if neither of them are discernible in the *Being* of the *world*? And as the opinion of *Epicurus* destroys *Religion*, so doth that of *Aristotle* which attributes *eternity* to the *Universe*, and a *necessary emanation* of it from the first cause, as *light* comes from the *Sun*; for if so, as *Maimonides* well observes, the *whole religion* of *Moses* is *overthrown*, all his *miracles* are but *impostures*, all the *hopes* which are grounded on the *Promises* of *God*, are *vain* and *fruitless*. For if the *world* did of *necessity* exist, then *God* is no *free agent*; and if so, then all *instituted Religion* is to no purpose; nor can there be any *expectation* of *reward*, or *fear* of *punishment* from him who hath nothing else to do in the *world*; but to set the great wheel of the *Heavens* going! So much is it our *concernment* to enquire into the true *original* of the *world*; and on what *evidence* of *reason* those *opinions* are built, which are so contrary to that *account* given of it in the very *entrance* of the *Books* of *Moses*. Wherein we read the true *origin* of the *world* to have been by a *production* of it by the *omnipotent Will* and *Word* of *God*. This being then the plain *assertion* of *Moses*, we come to compare it, in point of *reason*, with all those several *hypotheses* which are *repugnant* to it, which have been embraced in several *ages* by the *Philosophers* of greatest esteem in the world. Which may be reduced to these four: 1. Such as suppose the *world* to have existed as it is from all eternity.

More Nevock.  
P. 2. c. 25.

2. Such as attribute the formation of the world as it is to God: but withall assert the præ-existence and eternity of matter. 3. Such as deny any eternity to the world, but assert the origin of it to have been by a casual concurrence of atoms. 4. Such as endeavour to explain the origin of the Universe and all appearances of nature, merely by the Mechanical Laws of the motions of matter.

Sect. 2.

*Aristot. de cælo, l. 1. c. 10.*

I begin with those who asserted the eternity of the world as it is, among whom *Aristotle* hath born the greatest name; who seems to have arrogated this opinion to himself; for when he enquires into the judgment of the *Philosophers*, who had writ before him, he says of them, *ἄλλοι ποιοῦσι τὸν κόσμον ἔχειν ἀεὶ ὡς ἔστιν, ἄλλοι δὲ ἔχειν ἀρχήν*, all the *Philosophers* asserted that the world was made, tho' some one way, some another. And were this true which *Aristotle* saith, it would be the strongest prejudice against his opinion; for if the world had been eternal, how should it come to pass, that the eldest *Philosophers* should so readily and unanimously embrace that opinion which asserted the production of the world? Was it not a strong presumption of the novelty of the Universe, that all Nations to whom the *Philosophers* resorted had memorials left among them of the first origin of things? And from hence it is observable, that when the humour of philosophizing began to take the *Greeks* (about the XL Olympiad, when we may suppose *Thales* to flourish) the beginning of the world was no matter of dispute, but, taking that for granted, the enquiry was, out of what material Principle the Universe was formed; of which *Thales* thus delivers his

*De Nat. Deor. l. 1. cap. 25.*

opinion in Tully; *aquam dixit esse initium rerum, Deum autem eam mentem quæ ex aqua cuncta fingeret*; wherein he plainly distinguisheth the efficient from the material cause of the world. The prime efficient was God, the material principle, water. It is a matter of some enquiry, whether the first principles of Philosophy among the *Greeks* were not rather some traditional things conveyed to them from others, than any certain Theories which they had formed from their own experiments and observations. The former is to me far the more probable on many accounts, but chiefly on this, that the first principles of the two Founders of the chief sects of *Philosophers*, viz. the *Ionick* and *Italic* (for all the other were but the various issues of these two) did come so near to that which we have



have the greatest reason to believe to have been the most certain account of the origin of the world. For this opinion of *Thales* seems to have been part of that universal tradition which was continued in the world concerning the first principles of things: for I do not see any reason to averr with so much confidence, as some doe, that those *Philosophers* who spake any thing consonantly to *Moses*, must presently converse with the *Jews*, transcribe their opinions out of the *Scriptures*, or have them conveyed to them in some secret *Cabbala* of the *Creation*, as it is affirmed of *Pythagoras* and *Plato*, and may with no less reason of *Thales*. But this I suppose may be made evident to any considerative person, that those *Philosophers* of *Greece*, who conversed most abroad in the world, did speak far more agreeably to the true account of things, than such who only endeavoured by their own wits to improve or correct those principles which were delivered by the other *Philosophers*. Which I impute not so much to their converse with the *Mosaick writings*, as to that universal tradition of the first ages of the world, which was preserved far better among the *Phenicians*, *Egyptians*, *Chaldeans*, and others, than among the *Greeks*. For which we have this evident reason, that *Greece* was far more barbarous and rude in its elder times, than those other Nations were, which had means of preserving some monuments and general reports of the first ages of the world, when the *Græcians* wanted them. And therefore we find that *Greece* from its beginning shined with a borrowed light; and saw not by an extramission of rays of knowledge from it self, but by an intromission of those representations of things which were received from other Nations. Those who formed *Greece* first into civil societies, and licked it into the shape of well ordered Common-wealths, were such who had been traders for knowledge into foreign parts. To which purpose *Diodorus Siculus* informs us that *Lycurgus* and *Solon*, as well as the *Poets*, *Orpheus*, *Musæus*, *Melampus* and *Homer*, and the *Philosophers*, afterwards *Pythagoras*, *Plato*, and others, had gained most of their knowledge and wisdom out of *Ægypt*; nay, he saith in general, οτι ἅπ' ἑλληνι δεδξασινῶν ἐπὶ συνέσει καὶ παιδείᾳ, παρέβαλον εἰς Αἴγυπτον ἐν τοῖς ἀρχαίοις χρόνοις, ἵνα ἅπ' ἐν ταύτῃ νομίμων καὶ αἰδέας μείσθωσιν. All those who were renowned among the *Greeks* for wisdom and learning, did in ancient

*Biblioth. l. i.  
V. Euseb. Præp.  
Evangel. l. 10.*

time.

time resort to Egypt, to be acquainted with their *Laws* and *knowledge*. On this account therefore we are not to seek for the ancient and genuine *tradition* of the world from the *native* and *home-bred* Greeks, such as *Aristotle* and *Epicurus*, but from those who took the *pains* themselves to *search* into those *records* which were preserved among the *elder* and more *knowing* Nations: And although the Nations they resorted to, sought to *advance* their own *reputation* in the *histories* of their *ancient times*, of which we have already given a large account, yet they were more *faithfull* in the account which they gave of the *origin* of the *whole Universe*. For it appears from *Diogenes Laertius*, that the *Egyptians* did constantly believe, that the world had a *beginning*, and was *corruptible*; that it was a *spherical*, and the *stars* were of the nature of *fire*; that the *soul* was of an *immortal nature*, and did *pass up and down* the world. Which *Laertius* cites from *Hecataeus* and *Aristagoras*. So that we need not make *Pythagoras* acquainted with such a *Cabbala* of the *Creation*, which in all probability neither the *Jews* nor he ever dreamt of; we find a fair account may be given of most of the *opinions* of *Pythagoras*, and whence he derived them, without forcing the words of *Moses* into such a *fence*, which the *plainness* and *perspicuity* of the *writings* of *Moses*, argue them not capable to admit of. But I will not deny from those concurrent *testimonies* of *Hermippus* and *Aristobulus*, besides *Origen*, *Porphyrus*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and others, that *Pythagoras* might have had opportunity of conversing with the *Jews*, (which it is most probable was in *Chaldaea*, after the *Captivity*, at which time *Pythagoras* was there among them) but that *Pythagoras* should converse with the successors of *Elisha* on mount *Carmel*, as *Vossius* thinks; or that *Moschus* the *Sidonian Philosopher*, in *Iamblicus*, should be *Moses*, as others *fancie*; or that *præ-existence* of *souls* should be part of the *Mosaick Cabbala*; or that the *Pythagorick numbers*, as they are explained by *Nicomachus Gerasenus* in *Photius*, should be *adæquate* to the *days* of the *Creation Cabbalistically* understood, are *fancies* too *extravagant* and *Pythagorean*, to be easily embraced. If *Pythagoras* was *circumcised*, it was more for *love* of the *Egyptians* than the *Jews*, among whom he spent his twenty two years; if *præ-existence* of *souls* be a rational *hypothesis*, we may thank

Diog. Laert.  
proœm. p. 7.

V. Selden. de  
jure nat. & gen.  
apud Ebraeos,  
l. I. c. 2.

Voss. de Sæctis  
Philosoph. c. 6.  
sect. 5.



thank the *Egyptians* for it, and not *Moses*; if numbers be so expressive of the work of Creation, we are beholding to the *Arithmetical Hieroglyphicks* of *Egypt* for them. But although *Pythagoras* might not be acquainted with such a philosophick *V. Mathem Hieroglyph. Kircheri. Tom. 3. Oedip. Egypt.* Cabbala of the Creation, which none of the *Jews*, as far as we can find, understood, till one more versed in *Plato* and *Pythagoras* than in the learning of his own Nation, viz. *Philo* of *Alexandria*, began first to exercise his wit on the Text of *Moses*, with *Platonic* notions; yet I shall easily grant that *Pythagoras*, by means of his great industry and converse with the learned Nations, might attain to far greater knowledge of many mysterious things in natural Philosophy, and as to the origin of the Universe, than any of the home-bred Philosophers of Greece, or it may be, than any one of the Nations he resorted to, because he had the advantage of comparing the several accounts of them together, and extracting out that which he judged the best of them. And hence *Plutarch* tells us, that the first principles of the world, according to *Pythagoras*, were these two, the one was τὸ ποιητικὸν αἴτιον καὶ εἰδικόν (ὅπερ ἐστὶ νῦν ὁ Θεός) an active and forming principle, and that was God, whom he called Mind, (as *Anaxagoras* likewise did) the other was τὸ παθητικόν τε καὶ ὕλικόν (ὅπερ ἐστὶν ὁ ἀεὶ ὄντως κόσμος) passive and material, which is, the visible world.

*Plutarch. de Plat philosoph. l. 1. cap. 3.*

*Sect. 3.*

And thus we see these two renowned Founders of the *Ionick* and *Italic* societies of Philosophers, both giving their concurrent Testimony with *Moses* as to the true origin of the world, and not at all differing from each other; for thus *Thales* speaks in *Diogenes Laertius*, πρεσβύτατον ὅς ἐστιν ὄντων, θεός· ἀρχόντων γὰρ, καλλίστην κόσμον, πνῆμα γὰρ θεῶν, God is the eldest Being, because unbegotten; the world the most beautiful, because it is God's workmanship. To which those expressions of *Plato*, in his *Timæus*, come very near (whose Philosophy was for substance the same with the *Pythagorean*) when he had before ascribed the production of the world to the goodness of God, which goodness of his did incline him to make all other things like himself. Θέμις ἔτ' ὡς ἔτ' ἐστὶ τὸ ἀεὶ ὄντως ἄλλο πλὴν τὸ καλλίστην. For the most excellent being cannot but produce the most excellent effects. And as to the material principle out of which the world was made, there appears no great difference between the ὕδωρ of *Thales*, and the ὕλη of *Plato* and

*V. Thalet.*

*Plato in Timæo, p. 1047. ed. Gicini.*

Chalcid. Timaeus, p. 25. ed. Meurf.

Annot. in l. 1. de Ver. Christ. Relig.

Chalcid. in Tim. p. 394.

Euseb. Præp. Evang. l. 1. c. 10.

Gen. 1. 2.

and *Pythagorus*; for *Plato*, when he tells us what a kind of thing the material principle was, he describes it thus, ἐν ἡ-  
 ουσαν ἀραν ἀλλὰ κινεῖσθον πλημμελῶς καὶ ἀτάκτως, which as *Chal-*  
*cidius* renders it, is *motu importuno fluctuans neque unquam*  
*quiescens*, it was a visible corporeal thing (πάν ἔσον ἢν ὁρᾶτόν) which was never at rest, but in continual disorderly motion and agitation: which is a full explication, I suppose, of what *Thales* meant by his water, which is the same with that ἰλύς or mixture of mud and water together, which others speak of as the principle of the Universe; as *Orpheus*, in *Athenagoras*, and the *Scholast* on *Apollonius* cited by *Grotius* and others. Which we have the more reason to believe, because the successors of *Thales*, *Anaximander* and *Anaxagoras*, express themselves to that purpose. *Anaximander* called the Sea, ἡ πᾶσις ὑγροῦς λεῖψανόν, the remainder of the primitive moisture: and *Anaxagoras* says, before the Νῆξ, or God, set things in their order, πάντα χεῖμας ἦν οὐκ περιμεικτά, all things were at first confused together: which must needs make that which *Chalcidius* tells us *Numenius* attributes to *Pythagoras*, which his Translator calls *Sylvam fluidam*, or fluid Matter. Which is the same likewise with the *Phœnicians* Μῶτ, which as appears by *Eusebius*, some call ἰλύν, others ἰλατώδες μίξις, ὁμίλην, some, mud or slime, others, the putrefaction of watery mixtures, which they say was, σπορά κτίσεως καὶ ἁίνσεως ὄλων, the seed-plot of the Creation and the generation of things. Thus we see how *Thales* with the *Phœnicians* from whom he was derived, as *Laertius* tells us and *Pythagoras*, with the *Egyptians* and others, concurr with *Moses*, not only in the production of the world, but in the manner of it, wherein is expressed a fluid matter which was the material principle out of which the world was formed, when we are told that the earth was without form and void, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, i. e. that all at first was but fluid matter; for *P. Fagius*, from *R. Kimchi*, renders מְרַח by מְלַח, which fluid matter was agitated and moved by the Divine Spirit, or the vis plastica mundi, so *Chrysostom* calls it ἐνέργεια ζώσκη and so *Drusius* and *P. Fagius* explain מְרַח by motion or agitation. And herein we have likewise the consent of those fore-named excellent Philosophers, who attribute the origin of particular things in the world to this agitation or motion of the



the fluid matter. For Chalcidius speaking not only of *Tbales*, *Chalcid.in Tem.*  
*Pythagoras*, *Plato*, but of *Anaximenes*, *Heracitus*, and others, *p. 378.*  
 says thus of them, *omnes igitur hi--in motu positam rerum ori-*  
*ginem censuerunt* : they all agreed in this, that the Origin of  
 things was to be ascribed to the motion of the parts of matter.  
 So the Phœnicians called this motion of the particles of matter  
*ἀέζα (ζοράδν κ) πνευματώδν* a dark and blustering wind. And  
 how suitable this explication of the Origin of things from  
 the motion of fluid matter is to the history of nature, appears  
 by those many experiments by which mixt bodies are shewed to  
 spring from no other material principle than the particles of  
 fluid matter. Of which you may read a discourse of that in-  
 genious and learned Gentleman Mr. Boyle in his *Sceptical Chy-*  
*mist*. Only thus much may here suffice to have made it ap- *Sceptical Chy-*  
 pear, that all those Philosophers, who were most inquisitive *mist.p.115. &c.*  
 after the ancient and genuine tradition of the world concerning  
 the first beginning of things, did not only concur with *Moses*  
 in the main thing, that its beginning was from God, but in the  
 particular circumstances of it, as to the fluid matter and the  
 motion thereof. Concerning which I may yet add, if it be  
 material, the Testimony of *Homer* in *Plutarch*.

Ωκεανός, ὅσπερ γένεσις πάντων τέτυκται.

*Iliad. E.*

And in Chalcidius : Inque eadem sententia *Homerus* esse inve-  
 nitur, cum *Oceanum* & *Tbetin* dicat parentes esse genituræ;  
 cumque iusjurandum *Deorum* constituat aquam, quam quidem  
 ipse appellat *Stygem*, antiquitati tribuens reverentiam, & jure-  
 jurando nihil constituens reverentius. To which purpose like-  
 wise *Aristotle* speaks in his *Metaphysicks*, that the reason why  
*Styx* was made the oath of the Gods, was because water was  
 supposed to be the material principle of things, which he saith  
 was ἀρχαία τις αἰὲν κὶ παλαιὰ περὶ τὸ φύσις δόξα, a most an-  
 cient tradition concerning the Origin of the Universe. And tells  
 us before, that some were of opinion, τὸς παμπάλαιος, κὶ πολὺ  
 πρὸ τῆς νῦν γένεσις κὶ πρῶτος θεολογήσαντας, that the most an-  
 cient and remote persons and first writers of Theology held this  
 opinion of water being the first material principle of things.

*Odyss. E.*

*Chalcid.p.178.*  
*V Meurs in.*  
*Chal. P. 37.*

*Metaphys. l. I.*  
*c. 3.*

Sect. 4.

Having thus made it appear what a *consent* there was between the *ancient tradition* of the world, and the *writings* of *Moses* concerning the *Origin* of the world; I now come to consider upon what *pretence* of *reason* this *tradition* came to be *contradicted*, and the *eternity* of the world asserted. For which we are to consider, that the *difference* of the former *Philosophers* of the *Ionick sect*, after the time of *Thales*, as to the *material principle* of the world, one *substituting* *air*, another *fire* instead of *water*, rendred the *tradition* its self *suspected* among other *Philosophers*, especially when the *humour* of *innovating* in *Philosophy* was got among them, and they thought they did nothing unless they *contradicted* their *Masters*; thence came that *multiplicity* of *Sects* presently among them, and that *Philosophy* which at first went much on the *original tradition* of the world, was turned into *disputes* and *altercations*, which helped as much to the finding out of *Truth*, as the *fighting* of two *Cocks* on a *dung-hill* doth to the finding out the *Jewel* that lies there. For which, *scraping* and *searching* into the *natures* of *things* had been far more *proper*, than *contentions* and *wranglings* with each other; but by means of this *litigious humour*, *Philosophy* from being a *design*, grew to be a mere *Art*, and he was accounted the best *Philosopher*, not that *searched* further into the *bowels* of *nature*, but that *dressed* and *tricked* up the *notions* he had in the best *posture* of *defence* against all who came to oppose him. From hence those *opinions* were most *plausible*, not which were most *true*, but which were most *defensible*, and which *Des-Cartes* his *second element*, had all the *Angles* cut off, on which their *adversaries* might have an *advantage* of *justling* upon them, and then their *opinions* were accounted most *pure* when they are so *spherical*, as to pass up and down without *interruption*. From such a *degeneracy* of *Philosophy* as this we have now mentioned, arose the *opinion* of the *eternity* of the world; for the certain *tradition* of the world being now *lost* in a *crowd* of *Philosophers*, whose main *aim* was to *set up* for themselves, and not to *trade* with the *common-bank*, so that there could be no certain and *convictive* evidence given to a *shuffling* *Philosopher* that *things* were ever otherwise than they are; they found it most *defensible* to assert that the world never had a *beginning*, nor would have an *end*, but always *did*, and would *continue* in the *State* they



they were in. This opinion, though *Aristotle* seems to make all before him to be of another mind, yet was hatched, as far as we can find, at first, under *Pythagoras* his successors by *Ocellus Lucanus*, as appears by his book still extant, *περὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς φύσεως* of the nature of the Universe; to whom *Aristotle* hath not been a little beholding, as *Ludov. Nogarola* hath in part manifested in his notes on *Ocellus*, although *Aristotle* had not the ingenuity of *Pliny*, *agnoscere per quos profecerit*. From *Aristotle* this opinion together with his name, spread it self much farther, and became the opinion most in vogue among the Heathen Philosophers, especially after the rise of Christianity; for then not only the *Peripateticks*, but the modern *Platonists*, *Plotinus*, *Apuleius*, *Taurus*, *Jamblichus*, *Alcinous*, *Proclus* and others, were all engaged in the defence of the eternity of the world, thinking thereby the better to overthrow Christianity. Hence came the hot and eager contests between *Proclus*, *Simplicius*, and *Philoponus*, who undertook to answer *Proclus* his eighteen arguments for the eternity of the world, and to charge *Aristotle* with self-contradiction in reference to it. But nothing were they more troubled about, than to reconcile the *Timæus* of *Plato* with the eternity of the world, which they made to be a mere Hypothesis, and a kind of Diagramme to salve providence withal; although the plain words of *Plato* not only there, but elsewhere do express, as far as we can judge by his way of writing, his real judgment to have been for the production of the world by God. For which purpose we have this observable Testimony in his *Sophista*, where he divides all manner of productions of things into divine and humane, and opposes the opinion that conceived all things to be produced by an eternal power, to the opinion of the vulgar, which saith he, was *τὸν φύσιν ἀπὸ φύσεως αἰτίας ἀνθρώπου καὶ ἀνὸς διανοίας φύσεως*, that all things were produced by a blind force of nature without any reason or counsel, to which he opposeth the other opinion, that they are made *καὶ λόγῳ τε καὶ ἐπιστήμῃσι θεῶν ἀπὸ θεῶν μηχανοῦντων*, by a divine power with infinite reason and wisdom, and when *Theætetus* expresseth himself in an Academical way as to either of these opinions, the *Sophes Eleatensis*, who there acts the part of the Philosopher, tells him, if he thought he were inclinable to the other opinion, *οὐκ ἂν τῷ λόγῳ καὶ πρὸς ἀναγκάσας ἐπὶ χειρὶ, ἀλλὰ ποιεῖν*

*Platon. Sophist.*  
p. 185. Ed. Fic.

ποιεῖν ἐμλογεῖν. He would undertake to make him confess the contrary by the evidence of reason which he would bring. And we shall see what great reason there is for this opinion, when we consider what weak and infirm foundations the contrary is built upon. For all the arguments which either Ocellus, or Aristotle, or the modern Platonists make use of, are built on these following suppositions which are all false. 1. That it is unconceivable that things should ever have been in any other state than they are. 2. That there is no other way of production but by Generation. 3. That God is no free agent, but produceth the world by necessity of nature.

Seet. 5.

1. That it is unconceivable that things should ever have been any otherwise than they are. The reason of which supposition was this, that the general conclusions of reason, which they proceed upon in Philosophy, were taken up from the observation of things as they are at present in the world. Which is evident from the ground of Aristotle's condemning the opinion of Empedocles, who asserted the production of the world, and yet the incorruptibility of it. τὸ μὴ ἔν γενέσθαι μὲν, αἰδῖον δ' ὅμως ἔχει φάναι καὶ ἀνθρώπων, which he accounts impossible and gives this as his reason, μόνον γὰρ τοῦτα δεξιὸν εὐλόγως, ὅτι ἐπὶ πολλῶν ἢ πάντων ὁρᾷμεν ἑαδεχοντα. For, saith he, nothing else can be rationally asserted, but what we find to be in all things or at least in most; now because there could nothing be found in the world which was produced (i. e. by generation) and yet was incorruptible, therefore he concludes it impossible it should be so with the Universe. By which we evidently see what the grand principles of reason among the Philosophers were: viz. such observations as they had made from the present course of nature in the order of the Universe. From hence arose that strong presumption among them, which hath been so taken for granted, that it hath been looked on as a common notion of humane nature, viz. ex nihilo nihil fit, which was the main argument used by them to prove the eternity of the world: and by others to prove the præ-existence of matter. So Ocellus argues against both the dissolution and production of the world from this principle; if the world be dissolved, saith he, it must either be ἢ πρὶ εἰς τὸ ὄν, ἢ εἰς τὸ μὴ ὄν, either into that which is, or into that which is not; it cannot be dissolved into that which is, because then the Universe cannot be destroyed; for that which is,

is.

Arist de cælo.  
l. 1. cap. 10.

V. Laer. in vit.  
Democriti.



is either the Universe, or a part of it : neither can it be dissolved into that which is not, ἀμύχανον γὰρ τὸ ἐν ἐμποτῆκεται ἐν τῷ μὴ ὄντι, ἢ εἰς τὸ μὴ ὄν ἀναλυθῆναι. For it is impossible that a thing should be made out of that which is not, or be dissolved into nothing. And Aristotle somewhere tells us, that it is a principle which all the writers of natural Philosophy are agreed in, (περὶ γὰρ πάντες ὁμογλωσσούντες τῆς δόξης ἅπαντες εἰ περὶ τῆ φύσεως) which is ἐκ μὴ ὄντων γίνεσθαι ἀδύνατον, that it is impossible for any thing to come out of nothing. But now when we observe upon what grounds this principle was took up by these Philosophers, we have no reason to admit of it as an Universal standard of nature. For we find by these Naturalists, who thus asserted this principle, that when they go about to prove it, it is only from the course of Generations in the world, or from the works of Art, both which suppose matter præ existent, and from these short collections they form this universal Maxim. And from hence when they discoursed of the manner whereby God did produce the world, their imaginations ran presently upon that which the Epicurean in Tully enquires after; *quæ molitio ? quæ ferramenta ? qui vectes ? quæ machinæ ? qui ministri tanti operis fuerunt ?* they apprehend God only as an Artificer that contrives the World first into a platform, and then useth instruments to erect it, and consequently still suppose the master ready for him to work upon. So true is that of Balbus in Tully when he comes to discourse of the nature of God ; *in quo nihil est difficilius quam à consuetudine oculorum aciem mentis abducere ;* nothing is more difficult than to abstract our minds from the observations of this visible world when we seek to apprehend the Nature of the Deity. Thus we see upon what general grounds the Philosophers proceeded, and from what they took them, and how insufficient any collections from the present order of the Universe are to determine any thing concerning its production by. For supposing a production of the world, several things must of necessity be supposed in it, different from what the present order of the world is ; and it is an unreasonable thing to argue from a thing when it is in its greatest perfection, to what must always have been in the same thing ; for by this means we must condemn many things for falsities which are apparently true, and believe many others to be true which are apparently false. For which Maimonides useth an excellent similitude. Suppose, saith he, one of Exquisite Nature

Ocellus Lucanus  
p. 16. ed. Com-  
mel.

Physic. l. 4.

De Nat. l. 1

De Nat. Deor.  
l. 2.

More Nevock.  
p. 2. c. 17.

tural parts, whose Mother dies assoon he is born, and his Father brings him up in an Island, where he may have no society with mankind till he be grown up to years of understanding, and that he never saw any female of either man or beast: Suppose now this person to enquire of the first man he speaks with, how men are born, and how they come into the world. The other tells him, that every man is bred in the womb of one of the same kind with our selves, thus and thus formed; and that while we are in the womb we have a very little body, and there move and are nourished, and we grow up by little and little till we come to such a bigness, and then we come forth into the world, and yet grow still till we come to such a proportion as we are of. Here presently this young man stops him and enquires, when we were thus little in the womb and did live, move and grow, did we not eat and drink, and breath at our mouth and nostrils as we do now? did we not ease Nature as we do now? If it be answered him, no; then he presently is ready to deny it, and offers to bring demonstrations that it was utterly impossible that it should be so: For, saith he, if either of us cease breathing, but for an hour, our motion and life is gone; how is it then possible for one of us though never so little, to live and move in the womb for so many months, when it is so close, and shut up, and in the middle of the body? If one of us, saith he, should swallow a little bird, it would presently die as soon as it came into the stomach, how much more if it were in the belly? If we should be but for fews days without eating and drinking, we could not live? how can a Child then continue so many months without it? Again, if one doth eat and not void the excrement of what he eats, he will be killed with it in few days; how can it possibly be otherwise with a Child? If it be replied that there is a passage open in the belly at which the Child receives his nourishment, he will presently say that it is as impossible as the other; for if our bellies were so open, we should be quickly destroyed. And again, if the child hath all its limbs perfect and sound, how comes it not to open its eyes, use the feet, mouth and hands, as we do? And so concludes it impossible that man should ever be born after this manner. Much after this way, saith that excellent Author, do Aristotle and others argue against the production of the world; for if the world were produced, say they, it must have been thus,



*thus, and thus, and it is impossible that it should have been so: why? because we see things are otherwise now in the world. Which how infirm a way of arguing, it appears from the consideration of the former similitude, in which the Arguments are as strong to prove the impossibility of that which we know to be true, as in the case about which we dispute.*

And this now leads us to the second false Hypothesis which the opinion of the world's eternity was founded on, which is, that there is no other way of production but by Generation. Most of the arguments which are used by Ocellus and Aristotle against the production of the world, run upon this supposition, that it must be generated as we see things are in the world.

So Ocellus argues, πᾶν τε τὸ γένεσθαι ἀρχὴν εἰληφός, καὶ διαλύσεως ὁρεῖλον κοινωνήσαι, ὥς (ὅτι δέχεται) μεταβολάς· μίαν μὲν τὴν ἀπὸ μείονος· ὅπῃ τὸ μείζον, καὶ τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ χειρότερου· ὅπῃ τὸ βέλτιον· καλεῖται δὲ τὸ μὲν ἀφ' ἧτις ἀν' ἀρχῇται μεταβάλλειν ἡμέτεροι· τὸ δὲ εἰς ὃ ἀφ' ἡμετέρων ἀκμῇ· δεύεται δὲ τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ μείζονος· ὅπῃ τὸ μείον, καὶ τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ βελτίονος· ὅπῃ τὸ χειρότερον· τὸ δὲ συμπεπεσμένον ἢ μεταβολῆς ταύτης ὀνομαζέται φθορῇ, καὶ διάλυσιν. *De Natur univ.* vers. p. 8.

Every thing that comes into being and is subject to dissolution, hath two observable mutations in it; the one is, whereby it grows from less to greater, and from worse to better, and this is called Generation, and the height of this mutation, perfection; the other begins from better to worse, and from bigger to less, and the conclusion of this is corruption, and dissolution. But now, saith he, if the world had a beginning, there would be such a mutation in it, and it would have grown by degrees greater till it had come to its perfection, and from thence it would sensibly decay till it came to dissolution; but no body hath ever observed such a mutation in the world, neither is there any appearance of it; ἀλλ' αἰεὶ καὶ αὐτὸ καὶ ὁμοιωτὸς διατελεῖ καὶ ἴσον καὶ ὁμοιον αὐτὸ ἑαυτῷ· but the world is semper idem, it varies not nor alters any thing from it self. For which, he particularly instanteth in the courses, Symmetries, figures, positions, intervals, proportions of motion which are in the world, which things all are capable of such a mutation, yet we see no such thing in the Universe, from whence he infers that the universe was always and will be as it is. Upon the same principle doth Aristotle dispute for the eternity of the world from the Nature of his *materia prima*, because if the first matter were generated it must be generated of other matter, and so in infinitum; and so he argues from the Nature of the Heavens that they are

not.

Seff. 6.  
2.

not capable of generation and corruption as other bodies are. All which Arguments signifie no more than this, that the World was not generated as Plants or Animals are; and whoever right in his wits asserted that it was? But do any of these Arguments prove it impossible that God having infinite power should produce the Universe after another way, than any of those things are produced in, which we observe in the World? For we assert an infinite and eternal Being which was the efficient cause of the world, who by his omnipotent power produced it out of nothing, and continues it in its Being; which is well expressed by the Author of the refutation of Aristotle in Justin Martyr's works. We assert, saith he, one God who is eternal himself, that hath nothing else co-equal with himself, neither by way of subjection or opposition, whose power is so great that nothing can hinder it, by which power he produced the world, ἀρχὴν ἔχοντος τῆς ἡ, καὶ τῆς πῆ ἡ, καὶ τῆς πῶς διαφέρειν, τῶ ἐκείνῃ ἴσῃσιν; which hath no other cause, either of its beginning, or of its being, or continuance, but only his Will. Who fully answers in a Philosophical manner, the particular Allegations out of Aristotle, concerning the eternity of the World: his design being, as he saith, to shew μὴ ὅτι τῶ ἀποδεικτικὸν ὁπσημύον, καὶ ἢν ἐπαγγέλλοντο Ἕλληνες περὶ Θεοῦ τε καὶ κτίσεων τὰς λόγους πρῆν, τῶ πεποιμκότας, ἀλλ' εἰκασμῶ τὸ δοκῶν διοισαμένους. That the Greek Philosophers in their discourses concerning God and the Creation, were very far from being as good as their word to observe the laws of demonstration, but instead of them proceeded only upon opinions and conjectures. And as to this particular of the possibility of another way of production, besides that of generation, he proves it from Aristotle's own opinion, from the equal necessity of the existence of matter, as of God. For, saith he, If God can produce any thing out of matter, which is as necessarily existent as himself, he may produce something out of nothing. For the same repugnancy that there is in that which is absolutely nothing to be produced, the same must there be in that which is necessarily existent. How then can God produce something out of matter which necessarily exists, and not be able to produce something out of nothing? For if matter have its origin from it self, how can it be subject to the power of another? And

Aristot. dogmat.  
everf. p. 141.

Justin Martyr.  
cp. p. 123.



And besides, if we acknowledge God to have his *Being* from himself, and on that account attribute *infinite power* to him, by the same reason we must attribute it to *matter*. But whatever hath *infinite power* in it self, hath a *power* upon *something* beyond it self; but if God and *matter* have it both, they can never have *power* upon each other, or without themselves. Which is a far greater *absurdity* than the mere asserting a *power* to produce *something* out of *nothing*, which is implied in the very notion of *infinite power*; for if it be confined to any *matter*, the *power* is not *infinite*, because we cannot but conceive the *bounds* of it; for it extends no farther than *matter* doth. So that a *power* of *creation* is implied in the very *Notion* of a *Deity*; and therefore it is a mere *Sophism* to argue because the *world* could not be *generated*, therefore it could not be *produced*, unless any other way of *production* but by *generation*, be proved *impossible*.

A third false *Hypothesis* they proceeded on was this, that the *Being* of the *world* was no effect of God's will, but of the necessity of *Nature*. For although the *Philosophers* we now speak of, did assert a *Deity*, which in some sense might be called the *cause* of the *world*, yet they withall asserted that the *world* was co-equal with God himself, and so though there might be some *priority* in order of *causes* between them, yet there was none in order of *time*, or *duration*, as we see the *light*, though it flows from the *Sun*, yet the *Sun* is never without *light*. This *Aristotle* proves from the necessity of *motion* and *time*: For, saith he, *whatever is moved, must be moved by something else, and consequently there must be a running in Infinitum*; but this runs on a false supposition of the necessity of a continual *physical motion* in *things*, which we deny, since God by his *infinite power* may give *motion* to that which had it not before; and so all that can be proved, is the necessity of some first *cause*, which we assert, but no necessity at all of his continual *acting*, since he may cause *motion* when he please. And for *time* continually existing, it denotes nothing real in it self existing, but only our *manner* of *conception*, of the *duration* of *things*, as it is conceived to belong to *motion*; and so can argue nothing as to the *real existence* of *things* from all eternity. But the latter *Platonists* look upon these as insufficient *ways* of *probation*, and therefore argue from

Sect. 7.  
3.

those attributes of God, which they conceive most necessary and agreeable to God's Nature; and by which the world was produced if at all: so that by the same arguments whereby we prove that the world was made by God, they prove it to have been from all eternity. It was well and truly said of Plato, in his *Timæus*, that the Goodness of God was the cause of the production of the world; from which speech the more modern Platonists gather a necessity of the world's eternity, for from hence they infer, that since God was always good, he must always have an object to exercise his goodness upon; as the Sun displays his light as soon as he is himself. True, were God of the nature of the Sun, it would be so with him; or were the Sun of the Nature of God, it would not be so with it. But there is this vast difference between them, that though God be essentially and necessarily good, yet the communications of this goodness are the effect of his will, and not merely of his nature; For, were not the acts of beneficence and goodness in God the free acts of his will, man must be made as happy as he was capable of being, not only upon his first existence in the world, but as long as it should continue, by mere necessity of nature, without any intervention of the will or actions of men. And so there could be no such difference as that of good and bad men in the world; for, if the letting forth of God's goodness to the world be so necessary, all men must become necessarily good, if God's goodness be so great as to be able to make men so; which I suppose will not be questioned. By this then we see that the communications of God's goodness to the world are free, and depend upon the eternal counsels of his will, which is a depth too great for us to approach, or look into; by what necessity then, if God be a free Agent, and of infinite wisdom, as well as goodness, must we either assert the eternity of the world, or fear to deprive God of his essential goodness? Whereas to make the communications of God's goodness ad extra necessary, and therefore to make the world from eternity, that he might have an object to exercise his goodness on, is, to take as much off from the infinite perfection and self-sufficiency of the divine nature as it would seem to flatter his goodness. For God cannot be himself without his goodness; and if his goodness cannot be without some creature to shew or display it upon, God cannot be perfect nor happy, without his creatures, because these



are necessary issues of his goodness; and consequently we make the Being of the creatures necessary to his being God. Which is the highest derogation from the absolute perfection of the Divine Nature. We assert then so much goodness in God, as none can be imagined greater, we assert, that it was the communication of this Divine goodness which gave being to the world; but with all we acknowledge God to be an Agent infinitely wise and free, who dispenseth this goodness of his in such a way and manner as is best pleasing to himself, though ever agreeable to his Nature. As God is infinitely good in himself, so whatever he doth is suitable to this nature of his; but the particular determinations of the acts of God's beneficence belong to the will of God, as he is a most free and independent Agent; so that goodness as it imports the necessary rectitude of the divine nature, implies a perfection inseparable from the true Idea of God; but as it is taken for the expressions of divine bounty to somewhat without, as the object of it, it is not implied in our conception of God, as to his nature, but belongs to the free determinations of his will. We cannot then, neither ought we to determine any thing concerning the particular ways of God's bounty towards the whole Universe, or any part of it, any farther than God himself hath declared it to us. Now we see the world exists, we have cause to adore that goodness of God, which not only gave a being to the Universe, but continually upholds it, and plentifully provides for all the Creatures which he hath made in it. Which the Heathen was so sensible of, that the Stoick in Tully taking notice of the abundant provision which is made in the world, not only for man's necessity, but for delight and ornament, cries out, *ut interdum Pronæa nostra Epicurea esse videatur*: God's providence doth abundantly exceed man's necessity. We see then from this Discourse, how unsafe and unsatisfactory (that I may not say bold and presumptuous) those arguments are, which are drawn from a general consideration of the divine nature and goodness, without regard had to the determinations of his will, as to the existence of things in the world. It cannot certainly then be an argument of any great force with any candid Enquirers after truth and reason, which hath been lately pleaded in the behalf of that Pythagorean hypothesis of the præ-existence of souls, viz, That if it be good for men's souls to be at all, the sooner

De Nat. Deor.  
l. 2.

they are, the better; but we are most certain that the Wisdom and Goodness of God will do that which is best; and therefore if they can enjoy themselves before they come into these terrestrial bodies (it being better for them to enjoy themselves than not) they must be before they come into these bodies. Wherefore the præ-existence of souls is a necessary result of the Wisdom and Goodness of God, who can no more fail to do that which is best, than he can to understand it. I now seriously enquire of such who love reason above Plato and Pythagoras, whether if the eternity of the world were put into the argument instead of the præ-existence of souls, this argument would not hold as strongly for that, as it doth for præ-existence; and if I am bound to believe præ-existence on this ground, I be not likewise bound to believe at least the souls of men eternal, if not the universe. But how reconcilable the eternity of the world is to the Pythagorick Cabbala of the Creation, I am yet to understand. But if this argument doth not at all infer the eternity of the world, as we have shewed it doth not, much less doth it præ-existence of souls.

Sect. 8.

We have thus far considered the first Hypothesis, which is repugnant to Moses, concerning the origin of the Universe, which is that which asserts the eternity of the world as it is; we come now to the second, which attributes the formation of the world as it is, to God, as the efficient cause; but attributes eternity to the matter out of which the world was framed. I am not ignorant that some who would be taken for the Masters of Reason, are so far from conceiving this hypothesis to be repugnant to the Text of Moses, that they conceive it to be the genuine sense of it, viz. that there was a præ-existent matter, out of which God formed the world. But I would willingly understand how Moses would have expressed that matter it self was created, supposing it had been his intention to have spoken it; for although the word ברא may not of it self imply necessarily the production of things out of nothing, i. e. out of no præ-existent matter; yet it is acknowledged by all, that no word used by the Jews is more proper to that than ברא is; and P. Fagius cites it from R. Nachmani, that the Hebrew Language hath no other word to signify such a production out of nothing but ברא. It is therefore a very weak manner of arguing, that because ברא is sometimes used for no more than

Valkelins de  
vera rel. l. 2. c. 4.



than *ἡ ύλη*, therefore the world was created out of *præ ex-  
istent matter*; all that can *rationaly* be inferred, is, that from  
the mere force and importance of that word the *contrary* can-  
not be collected: but if other places of *Scripture* compared,  
and the evidence of *reason*, do make it clear that there could  
be no *præ exsistent matter* which was *uncreated*, then it will ne-  
cessarily follow that *creation* must be taken in its proper sence.  
And in this sence it is evident, that not only *Jews* and *Chri-  
stians*, but even the *Heathens* themselves understood *Moses*,  
as is plain by *Galen*, where he compares the opinion of *Moses*, *Galen. de usu*  
with that of *Epicurus*, and ingenuously confesseth that of *Mo- part. l. 11.*  
*ses*, which attributed the production of things to *God*, to be far  
more *rational* and probable than that of *Epicurus*, which as-  
signed the origin of things to a mere casual *concourse* of atoms:  
but withal adds, that he must dissent from both; and sides  
with *Moses* as to the origin of such things as depend on *genera-  
tion*, but asserts the *præ exsistence* of matter, and withall, that  
*God's power* could not extend it self beyond the capacity of the  
matter which it wrought upon. *Atque id est*, saith he, in quo  
*ratio nostra ac Platonis, tum aliorum qui apud Græcos de re-  
rum natura recte conscripserunt, à Mose dissidet.* How true  
these words are, will appear afterwards. *Chalcidius* in his  
*Commentaries* on *Plato's Timæus*, where he speaks of the ori-  
gin of *ὑλη*, which in him is still translated *Sylva*, and inquires  
into the different opinions of all *Philosophers* about it, takes it  
for granted, that according to *Moses*, this *ὑλη* had its produ- *Chalcid. in Tim.*  
ction from *God*. *Hebræi sylvam generatam esse consitentur; p. 372.*  
*quorum sapientissimus Moyses non humana facundia, sed divina,*  
*ut ferunt, inspiratione vegetatus, in eo libro, qui de genitura*  
*mundi censetur, ab exordio sic est profatus, juxta interpretatio-*  
*nem LXX. prudentium; Initio Deus fecit cælum & terram.*  
*Terra autem erat invisibilis & incompta. Ut vero ait Aquila;*  
*Caput rerum condidit Deus cælum & terram; terra porro in-*  
*anis erat & nihil; velut Symmachus; Ab exordio condidit De-*  
*us cælum & terram. Terra porro fuit otiosum quid, confusum-*  
*que, & inordinatum. Sed Origenes asseverat ita sibi ab He-*  
*bræis esse persuasum, quod in aliquantum sit à vera proprietate*  
*derivata interpretatio. Fuisse enim in exemplari, Terra autem*  
*stupida quadam erat admiratione. Omnia tamen hæc in unum*  
*aiunt concurrere, ut & generata sit ea quæ subiecta est uni-*  
*verso.*

*verso corpori, Sylva, sermonesque ipsos sic interpretantur.* Where we find by the Testimony of Chalcidius an universal consent as to the production of the universal corporeal matter by God; for that is all which is understood by his term of *generata est*. But this same Author afterwards tells us, that by *Heavens* and *Earth* in the first verse of *Genesis*, we are not to understand the visible *Heavens* and *Earth*: For, saith he, the *Heavens*, which are called the *Firmament*, were created after, and on the third day, when the *Waters* were separated, the dry *Land* appeared, which was called *Earth*. *Qui tumultuario contenti sunt intellectu, cælum hoc quod videmus, & terram qua subvehimur, dici putant; porro qui altius indagant, negant hoc cælum ab initio factum, sed secundo die.* And therefore by the *Heavens* he understands *Incorpoream Naturam*, and by *earth*, *ἔλν*, or the *primigenial matter*. And this, saith he, appears by the following words, *The Earth was invisible and without form; i.e. this corporeal matter, before it was brought into order by the power and wisdom of God, remained a rude and indigested lump; and that which is so, might well be called invisible and without form.* And therefore it is called *inanis* and *nihil*, because of its capacity of receiving all forms, and having none of its own. *Symmachus* calls it *otiosa & indigesta*; the former, because of its inability to produce any thing of it self: the latter, because it wanted a divine power to bring it into due order. That stupidity and admiration which *Origen* attributes to it, he conceives to relate to the Majesty of God, who was the Orderer and Contriver of it, *siquidem Opificis & Auctoris sui Majestate capta stupuerit.* Thus we see that according to *Moses*, the first matter of the world was produced by God, which is largely manifested by *Origen* against the *Marcionists*, a fragment of which is extant in his *Philocalia*; and by *Tertullian* against *Hermogenes*, and others, who from the opinion of the *præ-existence* of matter, are called *Materiarii*.

*Origen. Philoc.  
cap. 24. Tertul.  
ad Hermog. per  
tot.*

#### Secl. 9.

*De Anima pro-  
creat. à Timæo.*

Having thus cleared the sence of *Moses*, it is far more difficult to find out the true opinions of the ancient *Philosophers* concerning the production or eternity of corporeal matter, there having been so great dissensions, not only about the thing its self, but about the opinions of some about it. For it is plain by *Plutarch's* *Λυχνονία*, as well as the discourses of the later



later *Platonists*, how eager some have been to interpret *Plato's Timæus* in favour of the eternity, at least of *matter*, if not of the *world*. But although *Plato* doth assert therein a *præ-existence* of *rude matter*, before the *formation* of the *world*, yet I see no reason why he should be otherwise understood than in the same sense that we believe a *Chaos*, to have gene before the bringing the *world* into the order it is now in. And in that sense may those places in *Plutarch* be interpreted, ὁ γὰρ ἐν τῷ μὴ ἵσθαι ἢ ὁρᾶν, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ μὴ καλῶς καὶ ἰκανῶς ἔχειν, and so likewise those following words, ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἔτε σῶμα τὸ αἰώμαλον, ἔτε ψυχὴν τὸ ἀψυχον ἐποίησεν. for the meaning may be no more than that *Plato* conceived that all the productions of the kinds of things, which are in the *world*, was out of a *præ-existent Hyle*, the one *spiritual* and *intelligible*, out of which he supposed *souls* to be formed, the other *sensible* and *corporeal*, out of which other *Beings* which were more *gross* and *material*, were produced. So *Chalcidius* tells us that both *Pythagoras* and *Plato* looked upon *constitutionem sylvæ* to be *opus providentiæ*: which I suppose relates not only to the bringing of *matter* into *form*, but to the *production* of *matter* it self. But after this he takes a great deal of pains to search out the true meaning of *Plato* concerning the *Origin* of *Hyle*, and mentions the great dissentions among the *Platonists* about it, and the obscurity of the *Timæus* in it. To him therefore I referr the Reader: Who likewise brings in *Numenius* largely discoursing concerning the opinion of *Pythagoras* about it, who condemns all those, as not understanding *Pythagoras*, who attribute to him the *production* of the *indeterminate Hyle*: These are his words, *Numenius ex Pythagoræ Magisterio Stoicorum hoc de initiis dogma resellens, Pythagoræ dogmate, cui concinere dicit dogma Platonicum, ait Pythagoram, Deum quidem singularitatis nominasse ( Col. nomine appellasse ) sylvam vero duitatis. Quam duitatem indeterminatam quidem, minime genitam, limitatam vero, generatam esse dicere. Hoc est, antequam exornaretur quidem, formamque & ordinem nancisceretur, sine ertu & generatione; exornatam vero atque illustratam, à Digestore Deo esse generatam. Atque ita quia generationis sit fortuna posterior, inornatum illud minime generatum, æquævum Deo, à quo est ordinatum, intelligi debeat. Sed ænnullos Pythagoreos, vim sententiæ non recte assessutos, putasse,*

*Chalcid. in Tim.*  
p. 377.

Pag. 401.

Pag. 393.

tasse, dici etiam illam indeterminatam & immensam duitatem, ab una singularitate institutam, recedente à natura sua singularitate, & in duitatis habitum migrante. But however these Pythagoreans might be deceived, who thought the Unity it self became the Deity, yet it is evident by Numenius, that he looked on the undetermined and confused matter to have been co-æval with God himself, and not produced by him. And if Numenius be as much to be credited in this as when he calls Plato, Moses Atticus, then the Creation of universal matter can be no part of Pythagoras his philosophick Cabbala. But whatever were the opinions of Plato and Pythagoras, concerning the first origin of matter, we are certain that the Stoicks generally asserted the improdution of matter, and make that to be as necessary a passive principle for the Being of the world, as God is the active and efficient Cause. So Diogenes Laertius reports of the Stoical principles concerning the origin of the Universe: Δοκεῖ δὲ αὐτοῖς ἀρχὰς εἶναι ἑστῶσαν δύο· τὸ ποιεῖν καὶ τὸ πάχον· τὸ μὲν ἐν πάχον εἶναι τὴν ἀποιον οὐσίαν τὴν ἄλλω· τὸ δὲ ποιεῖν, τὸ ἐν αὐτῇ λόγον τὸ θεόν. They make two principles of the Universe, one active, and the other passive; the passive, an essence without quality, called Hyle, or confused matter; the active, the reason which acts in the other, which is God. These two Principles Seneca calls Causa & Materia; esse vero debet, faith he, aliquid unde fiat; deinde, à quo fiat, hoc causa est, illud materia. Although Seneca seems to make a query of it elsewhere; quantum Deus possit? materiam ipse sibi formet, an data utatur? But Zeno is express in Stobæus, Οὐσίαν εἶναι τὴν ἑστῶσαν πάντων ἀρχὴν ἄλλω, ταύτην δὲ πᾶσαν ἀίδιον, ἕτε πλείω γινωσκόμενω ἕτε ἐλάττω. The first essence of all is matter, which is eternal, and not capable of accession, or diminution.

V. Zenon.

V. Lipsium in  
Physiol. Sto. l. i.  
c. 4.

Epist. 65.

Præfat. ad Nat.  
Quæst. Eclog.  
Physic.

In Tim. p. 388.

Secl. 10.

To the same purpose Chalcidius speaks, Stoici ortum sylvæ rejiciunt, quin potius ipsam & Deum, duo totius rei sumunt initia; Deum, ut opificem; Sylvam, ut quæ operationi subjiciatur. Una quidem essentia præditos facientem, & quod sit accipitur, id corpus esse; diversa vero virtute; quia faciat, Deum; quia fiat, Sylvam esse.

Having now found out the certain Assertors among the Heathen Philosophers of the eternity and improdution of matter as the passive principle of things, we come to examine the reason of this Hypothesis, and whether there were foundation enough for



for this *matter* to subsist upon from all *eternity*? It might be sufficient *prejudice* against this opinion, that it was built on the same *infirm conclusions* which that of the *eternity* of the whole *world* was, *viz.* that *Maxim* which *Lipsius* attributes to *Democritus*, but was embraced by all those *Philosophers* who denied *production* of *matter*, *μὴδὲν ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος γίνεσθαι*, *Physiol. Stoic.* *μὴδὲ εἰς τὸ μὴ ὄν φθίσεσθαι*, that nothing could be produced out of nothing, nor could return into nothing; which as we have already said, was only taken up from the established order of the *Universe*, and the manner of production of material *Beings*. But this is not all we have to charge this *Hypothesis* with; for,

1. It is repugnant to the *Natural Notion* of a *Deity*, which must imply in it an *omnipotent power*; For otherwise we degrade him to the imbecillity of *finite creatures*, if he cannot produce any thing which doth not imply a *contradiction*: but what *contradiction* is there in this, that *God* should give a *Being* to that which had none before? For that is all we understand by *Creation*, *viz.* the producing of something out of nothing, or which had nothing out of which it was produced. Now what *repugnancy* is there to any free principle of *reason*, that a power infinite should raise an *Insect* into *Being* without any *passive principle* out of which it was caused; and if an *Infinite power* can do that, it may as well produce the *world* out of nothing, else the power would not be *Infinite*; for it would have its bounds set, that thus far it could go and no further. Now if such a power in *God* implies no *contradiction* in its self, I say, the asserting the necessary existence of *matter* implies a *contradiction* to this power. For, 1. A power to produce something out of nothing would be to no purpose, if a *passive principle* or *præ-existent matter* be necessary to the production of any thing; and so that *Being* which hath a power to produce something out of nothing, hath only a power to produce something out of something, which is a plain *contradiction*. 2. If *God* hath a power to produce something out of nothing, either this power doth extend to the production of this *matter*, or not; if it doth, then it depends on him; if not, his power is not infinite, and so the same power is infinite and not infinite; which is another *contradiction*. So that it is plainly repugnant to the notion of a *God* to assert the necessary and eternal existence of *matter*.

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2. If *matter* be *unproduced*, then *necessary existence* must belong to it as well as to *God* ; and if *necessary existence* belongs to *matter*, *infinite power* must belong to it too ; For whatever necessarily exists is *self-originated* ; whatever is *self-originated*, could not by any *cause* whatsoever be hindered from *Being* ; what cannot by any *cause* be hindered from *Being*, hath *infinite power* ; what hath *infinite power*, may produce any thing, and is *God*, and so *matter* cannot be a mere *passive principle*, but must be an *active*, and so must be *God himself*, or else there must be more *Gods* than one. To an argument something of this nature *Hermogenes* in *Tertullian* replies, that *matter* would not lose the *Name* or *Nature* of *matter*, because of its *Co-eternity* with *God*, neither could it be *God* merely on that account, unless it had other things that were agreeable to the *Nature* of *God* as well as that. But I have already shewed that *necessary existence* implies other *perfections* going along with it : which is likewise thus proved by *Tertullian* in answer to *Hermogenes* ; the reason of the *imperfections* which are to be seen in any *creatures*, is from hence, that they derive their *Beings* from a *higher cause*, who creates them in what order he pleases ; but that which hath its original from its *self*, must on that account want those *imperfections* which other *creatures* in the *World* have ; and therefore if *necessary existence* be of the *Nature* of *matter*, all other *perfections* must belong to it too : and so there can be no *superiority* and *inferiority* between *God* and *matter*, because on both sides there will be *necessary existence*. *Divinitas gradum non habet, utpote unica* : and so the eternal existence of *matter*, is repugnant to the *unity* of *God*.

3. It is repugnant to the *Independency* of *God* : for it makes *God* *subject* to *matter*, and not *matter* to *God*. For if *God* cannot produce any thing without *præ-existent matter*, the *matter* is *necessary* to his *action*, and so *God* must depend on that which he can do nothing without ; and so *God's* using *matter*, is as *Tertullian* speaks, *ex necessitate mediocritatis suæ*, to help him in the production of things. *Nemo non subjicitur ei cujus eget ut possit uti*, as he goes on. Thus *matter* at last is crept above the *Deity*, that *God* can do nothing without its aid and concurrence ; and so as *Tertullian* sharply says, *God* is beholding to *matter* for every *Being* known to the world ; grande benefi-

Advers. Her-  
mog. c. 4.

Cap. 7.

Cap. 8.



*fictum Deo contulit ut haberetur hodie per quam Deus cognoscere-tur, & omnipotens vocaretur, nisi quod jam non omnipotens, si non & hoc potens ex nihilo omnia proferre.* Thus we see how irreconcilable this *Hypothesis* is with these *Attributes* of God.

4. It is repugnant to the immensity of God. For either God did exist *separate* from this eternal matter, or was *conjoyned* with it; if *conjoyned* with it, then both made but one Being, as *Maximus*, or *Origen* argues; if *separate* from it, then *Orig. Philoc.* there must be something between them, and so there will be c. 24. three real *improduced things*. If it be answered that they are neither *conjoyned* nor *separate*, but God is in matter as in his proper place, as the *Stoicks* asserted, it is easily replied, that either then he is in a part of matter, or the whole matter; if in a part only, he cannot be *immense*; if in the whole as his *adequate place*, how could he then ever frame the World? For either he must then recede from that part in which he was, and *contract* himself into a narrower compass that he might *fashion* that part of the World which he was about, or else he might likewise frame part of *himself* with that part of the World which he was then framing of, which consequence is unavoidable on the *Stoical Hypothesis* of God's being corporeal and confined to the World as his proper place. And so much for this second *Hypothesis* concerning the *Origin* of the *Universe*, which supposeth the eternity of matter as co-existing with God.

I come now to that which makes most noise in the World, *Secl. II.* which is the *Atomical* or *Epicurean Hypothesis*, but will appear to be as *irrational* as either of the foregoing, as far as it concerns the giving an account of the *Origin* of the *Universe*. For otherwise supposing a *Deity* which produced the world and put it into the order it is now in, and supremely governs all things in the world, that many of the *Phænomena* of the *Universe*, are far more intelligibly explained by matter and motion than by *substantial forms*, and *real qualities*, few free and unprejudiced minds do now scruple. But because these little particles of matter may give a tolerable account of many appearances of nature, that therefore there should be nothing else but matter and motion in the World, and that the *Origin* of the *Universe* should be from no wiser principle than the casual concurrence of these *Atoms*, is one of the evidences of the

proneness of mens minds to be intoxicated with those opinions they are once in love with. When they are not content to allow an *Hypothesis* its due place and subserviency to God, and providence, but think these *Atoms* have no force at all in them unless they can extrude a *Deity* quite out of the World. For it is most evident that it was not so much the truth as the serviceableness of this *Hypothesis*, which hath given it entertainment among men of *Atheistical* spirits. *Epicurus* himself in his Epistle to *Pythocles* urgeth that as a considerable circumstance in his opinion that he brought no God down upon the stage to put things in order,  $\chi \eta \eta \theta \epsilon \iota \alpha \phi \upsilon \varsigma \iota \varsigma \pi \rho \omicron \varsigma \tau \acute{\alpha} \upsilon \tau \alpha$   $\mu \epsilon \tau \alpha \lambda \eta \theta \epsilon \omega \varsigma \tau \alpha \rho \acute{\epsilon} \delta \omega$ , which his Paraphrast *Lucretius* hath thus rendred.

Apud. Diog.  
Laert. l. 10.  
Lucret. de  
Nat. l. 5.

*Nequaquam nobis divinitus esse paratam  
Naturam rerum.*

If this opinion then be true, the history of the creation quite falls to the ground, on which account we are obliged more particularly to consider the reason of it. The *Hypothesis* then of *Epicurus* is, that before the world was brought into that form and order it is now in, there was an infinite empty space in which were an innumerable company of solid particles or *Atoms* of different sizes and shapes, which by their weight were in continual motion, and that by the various occurrences of these, all the bodies of the Universe were framed into that order they now are in. Which is fully expressed by *Dionysius* in *Eusebius*, and very agreeably to the sense of *Epicurus* in his Epistles to *Herodotus* and *Pythocles*, and to what *Plutarch* reports of the sense of *Epicurus*, though he names him not (if at least that book be his which *Muretus* denies) the words of *Dionysius* are these concerning the *Epicureans*,  $\omicron \iota \mu \epsilon \nu \gamma \alpha \rho \alpha \tau \omicron \mu \omicron \varsigma \pi \epsilon \rho \sigma \iota \pi \acute{\tau} \omicron \nu \epsilon \varsigma$   $\alpha \phi \theta \alpha \rho \tau \acute{\alpha} \tau \iota \nu \alpha \chi \eta \sigma \mu \iota \kappa \epsilon \tau \acute{\alpha} \tau \alpha \sigma \acute{\omega} \mu \alpha \tau \alpha$ ,  $\pi \lambda \eta \theta \omicron \varsigma \alpha \nu \acute{\alpha} \theta \epsilon \iota \sigma \mu \alpha$ ,  $\kappa \alpha \iota \tau \iota \chi \omega \rho \iota \omicron \nu$   $\kappa \epsilon \nu \omicron \nu$ ,  $\mu \acute{\epsilon} \gamma \epsilon \theta \omicron \varsigma \alpha \pi \epsilon \iota \delta \epsilon \upsilon \sigma \iota \nu \pi \epsilon \rho \beta \alpha \lambda \lambda \acute{\omicron} \mu \epsilon \theta \omicron \iota$ ,  $\tau \acute{\alpha} \upsilon \tau \alpha \varsigma \delta \acute{\eta} \phi \alpha \sigma \iota \tau \acute{\alpha} \varsigma \alpha \tau \omicron \mu \omicron \varsigma$   $\omega \varsigma \epsilon \pi \omega \chi \epsilon \nu \epsilon \nu \tau \acute{\omega} \kappa \epsilon \nu \acute{\omega} \phi \epsilon \rho \rho \omega \delta \acute{\alpha} \varsigma$ ,  $\alpha \upsilon \tau \omicron \mu \acute{\alpha} \tau \omega \varsigma \tau \epsilon \sigma \mu \iota \pi \tau \iota \theta \acute{\epsilon} \sigma \alpha \varsigma \alpha \lambda \lambda \acute{\eta} \lambda \lambda \alpha \iota \varsigma$   $\delta \iota \alpha \rho \acute{\upsilon} \mu \mu \eta \nu \alpha \tau \alpha \chi \iota \omicron \nu \chi \eta \sigma \mu \iota \pi \lambda \epsilon \kappa \omega \mu \acute{\epsilon} \lambda \omega \varsigma$   $\delta \iota \alpha \tau \omicron \mu \acute{\alpha} \lambda \lambda \omicron \nu \delta \alpha \lambda \lambda \acute{\eta} \lambda \lambda \omicron \nu$   $\delta \eta \lambda \alpha \mu \beta \acute{\alpha} \nu \epsilon \sigma \theta \alpha \iota$ ,  $\chi \eta \epsilon \pi \omega \tau \omicron \nu \tau \epsilon \chi \acute{\omicron} \sigma \mu \omicron \nu$ ,  $\chi \eta \tau \acute{\alpha} \epsilon \nu \alpha \upsilon \tau \acute{\omega}$ ,  $\mu \acute{\alpha} \lambda \lambda \omicron \nu \delta \chi \acute{\omicron} \sigma \mu \omicron \varsigma$   $\alpha \pi \acute{\epsilon} \theta \epsilon \upsilon \varsigma \alpha \pi \omicron \lambda \epsilon \acute{\iota} \nu$ . So that according to this opinion, all the account we have of the Origin of the world, is from this general Rendezvous of *Atoms* in this infinite space, in which after many encounters and facings about, they fell into their several troops, and made up that ordered *Battalia* which now the

Præp. Evang.  
l. 14. c. 22. p.  
421. R. St.

De Placitis  
Phil. l. 1. c. 4.  
Annot. in Senec.  
de provid.



the world is the *Scheme* of. It was not imprudently done of *Epicurus* to make the worlds *infinite*, as well as his *space* and *Atoms*; for by the same reason that his *Atoms* would make *one* world, they might make a *thousand*; and who would spare for *worlds*, when he might make them so easily? *Lucretius* gives us in so exact an account of the several *courses* the *Atoms* took up in disposing themselves into *bodies*, as though he had been *Muste-Master-General* at the great *Re-dexvoux*; for thus he speaks of his *Atoms*.

*De Nat. rer. l. 1.*

*Quæ quia multimodis, multis mutata per omne  
Ex Infinito vexantur percita plagis,  
Omne genus motus & cætus experiundo,  
Tandem deveniunt in taleis disposituras,  
Qualibus hæc rebus consistit summa creata.*

And more particularly afterwards;

*Sed quia multa modis multis primordia rerum  
Ex Infinito jam tempore percita plagis,  
Ponderibusque suis consuerunt concita ferri,  
Omnimodisque coire, atque omnia pertentare,  
Quæcunque inter se possunt congressa creare;  
Ut non sit mirum, si in taleis disposituras  
Deciderunt quoque, & in taleis venere meatus,  
Qualibus hæc rerum genitum nunc summa novando.*

*Lib. 5.*

Thus we see the *substance* of the *Epicurean Hypothesis*, that there was an *Infinite* number of *Atoms*, which by their frequent *occurrences* did at last meet with those of the same nature with them; and these being conjoyned together made up those *bodies* which we see; so that all the account we are able to give according to this *Hypothesis* of all the *Phænomena* of the *Universe*, is from the fortuitous *concourse* of the *Atoms* in the first forming of the world, and the different contexture of them in bodies. And this was delivered by the ancient *Epicureans* not with any doubt or *Hesitation*, but with the greatest confidence imaginable. So *Tully* observes of *Velleius* the *Epicurean*, beginning his discourse, *fidenter sane ut solent isti, nihil tam l. 1.* verens quam ne dubitare de aliquare videretur; tanquam modo ex Deorum concilio, & ex Epicuri intermundiis descendisset: Confidence was the peculiar genius of that sect, which we shall see in them to be accompanied with very little reason.

*De Nat. Deor.*

Sect. 12.

For those *two things* which make any principles in *Philosophy* to be rejected, this *Atomical Hypothesis* is unavoidably charged with; and those are, *If the principles be taken up without sufficient ground in reason for them; and if they cannot give any sufficient account of the Phænomena of the world.* I shall therefore make it appear, that this *Hypothesis*, as to the *Origin* of the *Universe*, is first, *merely precarious*, and built on no sufficient grounds of reason. Secondly, *That it cannot give any satisfactory account of the Origin of things.*

1. That it is a *precarious Hypothesis*, and hath no evidence of reason on which it should be taken up; and that will be proved by two things. 1. *It is such an Hypothesis as the Epicureans themselves could have no certainty of according to their own principles.* 2. *That the main principles of the Hypothesis itself are repugnant to those Catholick Laws of nature which are observed in the Universe.*

1. *The Epicureans according to their own principles could have no certainty of the truth of this Hypothesis.* And that, 1. *Because they could have no certain evidence of its truth.* 2. *Because their way of proving it was insufficient.*

1. *That they could have no certain evidence of the truth of it, I prove from those criteria, which Epicurus lays down as the only certain rules of judging the truth of things by; and those were Sense, Anticipation and Passion.* Let sense be never so infallible a rule of judgment, yet it is impossible there should be any evidence to sense of the truth of this *Hypothesis*; and let him extend his *παραβολή* as long as he please, which was his great help for correcting the errors of sense, viz. as it was in the Roman Court when the case was not clear, *ampliandum est*; So Epicurus would have the object represented every way it could be before he past his judgment; yet this prudent caution would do him no good for this *Hypothesis*, unless he were so wise as to stay till this world were crumbled into *Atoms* again, that by that he might judge of the *Origin* of it. There is but one way left to find out the truth of things *inevident* to sense, (as by Epicurus his own confession all these *Atoms* are, which are now the component particles of bodies; much more those which by their fortuitous concurrence gave Being to the world) and that is, if something evident to sense doth apparently prove it, which is  
his



his way of *proving* a *Vacuity* in nature and motion ; but tho' that be easily answered by principles different from those of *Epicurus*, and more rational ; yet that very way of probation fails him in this present *Hypothesis*. For what is there evident to sense which proves a fortuitous *concourse* of *Atoms* for the production of things ? nay if we grant him that the composition of bodies is nothing else but the contexture of these insensible particles, yet this is far from being an evidence to sense, that these particles without any wise and directing providence should make up such bodies as we see in the world. And here when we speak of the evidence of sense, we may well ask as the *Stoick* in *Tully* doth, whether ever *Epicurus* found a Poem made by the casual throwing of letters together ; and if a *concourse* of *Atoms* did produce the world, *cur porticum, cur templum, cur domum, cur urbem non potest ? why did it never* produce a cloyster, a temple, a house, a city, which are far easier things than the world ? I know *Epicurus* will soon reply, that things are otherwise in the world now than when it was first produced ; I grant it, and from thence prove, that because no such thing ever happens in the world now, as a merely casual *concourse* of *Atoms* to produce any things, *Epicurus* could have no evidence from sense at all to find out the truth of his *Hypothesis* by. And as little relief can he find from his second *Criterion*, viz. *Anticipation* ; for by his own acknowledgment, all *Anticipation* depends on the senses, and men have it only one of these four ways. 1. By *incurfion*, as the species of a man is preserved by the sight of him. 2. By *proportion*, as we can enlarge or contract that species of a man either into a Gyant or Pigmy. 3. By *similitude*, as we may fanfie the image of a City by resemblance to one which we have seen. 4. By *composition*, whereby we may joyn different images together, as of a horse and man to make a *Centaure*. Now though it be very questionable how some of these ways belong to a *Criterion* of truth, yet none of them, reach our case ; for there can be no *Incurfion* of insensible particles as such upon our senses ; we may indeed by *proportion* imagine the *parvitude* of them : but what is this to the proving the truth of the *Hypothesis* ? *Similitude* can do no good, unless *Epicurus* had ever seen a world made so ; the only relief must be from *composition*, and that will prove the

*De Nat. Deor.*  
l. 2.

*V. Gassendum*  
*de Logica Epicuri.* Op. To. 1.  
c. 7. Can. 7.

Origin

*Origin of the world by Atoms to be as true as that there are Centaures in the world, which we verily believe. These are the only Criteria which Epicurus would judge of the truth of natural things by (for the third, Passion relates wholly to things Moral and not Physical) and now let any one judge, whether the Hypothesis of the Origin of the Universe by Atoms can ever be proved true, either by the judgment of sense, or by Anticipation.*

Sect. 13.

2.

*The way they had to prove this Hypothesis was insufficient; and that was by proving that the bodies of the world are compounded of such insensible particles; Now, granting the thing, I deny the consequence; for what though the composition of bodies be from the contexture of Atoms, doth it therefore follow, that these particles did casually produce these bodies? nay doth it at all follow, that because bodies upon their resolution do fall into insensible particles of different size, figure and motion, therefore these particles must be præ-existent to all bodies in the world? For it is plain, that there is now an Universal lump of matter out of which these insensible particles arise, and whither they return on the dissolution of bodies; and all these various corpuseles may be of the same uniform substance only with the alteration of size, shape and motion; but what then? doth this prove, that because particular bodies do now emerge out of the various configuration and motion of insensible particles of that matter which exists in the world, that therefore this whole matter was produced by the casual occurrences of these Atoms? It will ask more time and pains than is usually taken by the Philosophers either ancient or modern, to prove that those things whatsoever they are, whether elements or particles out of which bodies are supposed to be compounded, do exist separately from such compounded bodies, and antecedently to them. We find no Aristotelian elements pure in the world, nor any particles of matter destitute of such a size, figure and motion as doth make some body or other. From whence then can we infer either the existence of Aristotle's materia prima, without quiddity, quantity, or quality, or the Epicurean Atoms without such a contexture as makes up some bodies in the world? Our profound Naturalist Dr. Harvey, after his most accurate search into the natures and Generation of things, delivers*



delivers this as his experience and judgment concerning the commonly reputed elements or principles of bodies. For speaking of the different opinions of *Empedocles*, and *Hippocrates*, and *Democritus*, and *Epicurus*, concerning the composition of bodies, he adds, *Ego vero neque in animalium productione, nec omnino in ulla corporum simularium generatione, (sive ea partium animalium, sive plantarum, lapidum, mineralium, &c. fuerit) vel congregationem ejusmodi, vel miscibilia diversa in generationis opere unienda præ-existere, observare unquam potui.* And after explaining the way which he conceived most rational and consonant to experience in the generation of things, he concludes his discourse with these words; *Idemque in omni generatione fieri crediderim; adeo ut corpora simularia mixta, elementa sua tempore priora non habeant, sed illa potius elementis suis prius existant (nempe Empedoclis atque Aristotelis igne, aqua, aere, terra, vel Chymicorum sale, sulphure, & Mercurio, aut Democriti atomis) utpote natura quoque ipsis perfectiora. Sunt, inquam, mixta & composita, etiam tempore priora elementis quibuscumque sic dictis, in quæ illa corrumpuntur & desinunt; dissolvuntur, scilicet, in ista ratione potius quam re ipsa & actu. Elementa itaque quæ dicuntur, non sunt priora istis rebus quæ generantur aut oriuntur; sed posteriora potius, & reliquæ magis quam principia. Neque Aristoteles ipsemet aut alius quispiam unquam demonstravit, elementa in rerum natura separatim existere, aut principia esse corporum simularium.* If then none of these things which bodies are resolved into, and are supposed to be compounded of, either have been or can be proved to exist separate from and antecedent to those bodies which they compound, what then becomes of all our company of *Atoms* which are supposed by their concurrence in an infinite space to be the origin of the world? I know not where to find them, unless dancing with the School-men's *Chimera's* in a vacuum, or in a space as empty as the infinite one, viz. some *Epicurean's* brains. Neither therein will they be much unlike their great master *Epicurus*, if we believe the character which the *Stoick* in *Tully* gives of him, who saith he was *homo sine arte, sine literis, insultans in omnes, sine acumine ullo, sine auctoritate, sine lepore.* But allowing the *Stoick* some of that passion, (which he disclaimed so much) in these words; yet we may rather believe what *Tully* himself elsewhere speaks of *Epicurus* his sentiments,

*De Generat.  
Anim. Exercit.*

*De Nat. Deor.  
l. 2.*

ments, that they were none of them *handsom* or becoming a man. *At ille quid sentit?* saith he of *Epicurus*; and soon replies, *sentit autem nihil unquam elegans, nihil decorum*; and in another place speaking of his *Morals*, he saith, *nihil generosum sapit atque magnificum, there was nothing noble and generous in him*. Which Censure of *Epicurus*, all the pains that *P. Gassendus* hath taken in the vindication of the *life* and opinions of *Epicurus*, hath not been able to wipe off. For although we should yield what that *learned man* so much contends for, that all the *calumnies* which were cast on *Epicurus* arise from the *antipathy* between *Zeno* and the following *Stoicks* and the *School of Epicurus*; yet all this will not make *Epicurus* to have been comparable with some other *Philosophers* for *parts* and *judgment*, whose *Principles* have somewhat more *generous* and *venerable* in them, than the *Morals* of *Epicurus* had, taking them in their more refined sence.

Sect. 14.

But it is not the *Morality* of *Epicurus* which we now enquire after; our business is to see how well he acquits himself in rendring an *account* of the *origin* of the *Universe* without a *Deity*. And so we come to consider the *Hypothesis* it self, whether it be *rational* or no, or consistent with the *Catholic* *Laws* of *nature* which appear in the *world*. Two things I shall here enquire into, which are the main *principles* of *Epicurus*, viz the *motion* of these *Atoms* in the *infinite space*, and the *manner* of the *concretion* of *bodies* by the *concourfe* of these *Atoms*.

1. I begin with their *motion*; which *Epicurus* attributes to his *Atoms* without any *hesitation*, and yet never undertakes to give an *account* of the *origin* of that *motion*; which argues his whole *Hypothesis* to be extremely *precarious*. The thing then, (which he must assume as his main *principle*, without which all his other doe nothing) is, That *motion* doth inseparably belong to the least *Atom* or *insensible particle*; for without this there cannot be imagined any *concourfe* of *Atoms* at all, much less any such *texture* of *bodies* out of them. But for one to say that *Atoms* move, because it is their *nature* to move, and give no other *account* of it, is so *precarious*, that it will never give the least *satisfaction* to an *inquisitive mind*. And it will be the least of all *pardonable* in the *Exploders* of *substantial forms* and *occult qualities*, when the *origin* of the whole



whole world is resolved into an occult quality which gives motion to *Atoms*. And herein the *Atomists* out-doe the most credulous *Peripateticks*, seeing they lay the prime foundation of the world and of their own philosophy together in a thing they can give no rational account of at all, which is, the motion of *Atoms* in an infinite vacuity. If it be replied, which is all *Epicurus* hath to say, that the motion of *Atoms* depends upon their gravity; the question returns upon him with the same violence, how comes this gravity to belong to these *Atoms* in such an empty space, where there can be no impulsion from other bodies, no attraction from any magnetick particles which are supposed to be the causes of the descent of heavy bodies? Nay, *Epicurus* himself takes away any center of that motion of *Atoms*; and yet attributes a necessary descent to his *Atoms* by virtue of their gravity; and if a Philosopher may beg such things as these are, so repugnant to the *Phænomena* of nature, without assigning any other reason for them, but that it is their nature, let us never venture *Philosophizing* more, but sit down in that contented piece of ignorance which attributes the causes of every thing unto specifick forms and occult qualities. For this is so shamefull a piece of beggary, that *P. Gassendus* doth more than once disclaim it, and in his discourse of motion doth prove an impossibility of motion in an infinite empty space. Might not *Epicurus* then have saved his credit better by sitting down with the opinions of his fore-fathers, than thus to go a begging for such *Hypotheses*, which none, who are not resolved to be ignorant, will be ready to grant him?

But yet this is not all, but according to this fundamental principle of *Epicurus*, viz. That there is a principle of motion in every insensible particle of matter, he plainly overthrows another principle of his, which is, the solidity and different magnitude of these *Atoms*. These particles are supposed so solid, that *Dionysius* in *Eusebius* tells us the account given why they are called *ἄτομοι* was, διὰ τὴν ἀλυσὶν σιῆσθαι, because of their indissoluble firmness; and the different sizes of these *Atoms* is so necessary a principle, that from thence they undertake to resolve many *phænomena* of the Universe: let us now see how consistent these things are with the inseparable property of motion belonging to *Atoms*: For if there be particles of such different sizes, then it is plain that there are some particles which may

*Physic. s. 1. l. 3. c. 7.*  
De apparent. magnitud. Solis humilis & sublimis, ep. 4. s. 3.  
De motu Physic. s. 1. l. 5. c. 2. v. ep. de motu impresso à motore translato.  
To. 3. op.

Sect. 15.

*Præp. Evangel. l. 14. c. 22.*

not only be conceived to be *bigger* than others, but are really so; and so there must be more parts of *matter* imagined in this bigger *particle* than in another less; and if there be more parts, these parts may be conceived separate from each other, that this *particle* may be equal to the other; now then, I demand, if *motion* doth inseparably belong to the least *particle* of *matter*, how comes one to be bigger than the other? for herein we see that every *particle* is not in distinct *motion*; for there cannot but be more imaginable *particles* in an *Atom* of a bigger size than in a less; and if so, there must be some union of those imaginable *particles* in that bigger *Atom*; and how could such an union be without rest, and what rest could there be if *motion* doth inseparably belong to every *particle* of *matter*? And so it must be in all those *Atoms* which are supposed to have angles and hooks, in order to their better catching hold of each other, for the composition of bodies; how come these hooks and angles to be annexed to this *Atom*? for an *Atom* may be without them; whence comes this union, if such a principle of *motion* be in each *particle*? if it be answered, that *motion* did belong to all these *particles*, but by degrees the lesser *particles* biting together made up these angled and hooked *particles*; I soon reply, that the difficulty returns more strongly; for if these angled and hooked *particles* be supposed necessary to the contexture and union of bodies; how came those least imaginable *particles* ever to unite without such hooks and angles? And so the question will return in infinitum. If then the solidity and indivisibility of these angled *Atoms*, doth depend on the union and rest of those lesser imaginable *particles* joyned together, then it is evident that *motion* is no inseparable property of all these *particles*, but some are capable of union, in order to the making of such hooks and angles, which are necessary for the contexture of bodies; and where there is union and solidity, there is rest, which is at least accompanied with it, if it be not one of the great causes of it. And without which the *Atomists*, of all other *Philosophers*, will be least able to give an account of firmness in bodies when they make bodies to consist of an aggregation of *particles*, by which it will be very hard finding a sufficient account of the difference between fluid and firm bodies, unless it be from the quicker motion and agitation of the *particles* of fluid bodies, and the



rest of the *small and contiguous parts* that make up the *firm body*, according to that *Catholick Law of nature*, whereby *things continue in the state they are in till some stronger force puts them out of it*. The only thing which the *Epicurean Atomists* have left to give any account of the *solidity of particles* of such different sizes, is, *the want of vacuity*; for, say they, *the ground of divisibility of bodies is the interspersion of a disseminated vacuum*; now where there is no *vacuity*, though the particles be of different size, yet they may be *solid and indivisible*. But this is taken off by the instance produced against other persons by that *ingenious and honourable Person Mr. Boyle* in his *Physiological Essays*, which is to this purpose, Suppose two of these presumed *indivisible particles*, both *smooth* and of a *cubical figure*, should happen to lie upon one another, and a third should chance to be fitly placed upon the upper of the two; what should hinder but that this *Aggregate* may by the *violent knock of some other corpuscles* be broken in the midst of the whole concretion, and consequently in the *middlemost body*? For suppose them as *solid* as may be, yet since *corpuscles* as hard as they, can be made very violently to knock against them, why may not those grate or break the *middlemost corpuscle*, or any of the others? And if there be a *possibility of breaking off* these *cubical particles* in the middle, then mere want of *vacuity* is no sufficient account of their being *indivisible*. By this we see how far the *Atomists* are from giving any rational account of the *origin of the motion of the Atoms* themselves without a *Deity*.

History of  
Fluid. and  
Firm. p. 202.

2. Supposing this *motion* to be granted them, yet they cannot give any *satisfactory account of the manner of concretion of bodies by the casual occurrences of these Atoms moving in an infinite empty space*. Which appears from those gross and extravagant *suppositions of Epicurus*, in order to the making these *Atoms* of his so *hit together* that they make up any bodies by their contexture.

Sett. 16.

1. He supposeth as it were *two regions*, a *superiour and inferiour* in an *infinite empty space*, which hath no *center* at all in it, nor any *body*, from which to measure those respects of *above and below*, as appears by his *Epistle to Herodotus*, wherein he saith, these terms of *ἄνω* and *κάτω*, or *upwards and downwards*, must be conceived without any bounds or limits at all.

So

Physic. f. 1. l. 3.  
c. 7.

So that though we conceive something superiour, we must imagine nothing supreme, and so on the contrary. Whereby it is evident, as *Gassendus* confesseth, that *Epicurus* thought the surface of the Earth to be a plain, and this plain to be continued up in a level superficies to the heavens, and so to all that immense space of the Universe. So that all those heavy bodies which should fall downwards in any parts of the widest distance on the earth, as in *Europe*, *Asia*, and *Africa*, would never meet (if they continued their motion) in the center of the earth, but would continue their motion still in a parallel line; and so he imagined that which is said to be above as to us, was really the upper part of the world, and so the descent of his Atoms, must necessarily be downwards towards the earth, according to the weight of them. And was not this a worthy mathematical supposition, for one who would undertake to give an account of the origin of the Universe without a Deity?

De Fin. l. 1.

This motion of descent by reason of the gravity of Atoms would not serve his turn; for if the Atoms moved downwards thus in a parallel line, how was it possible for them ever to meet for the contexture of bodies? Now for this purpose he invented a motion of declination; for finding the motion ad lineam, or ad perpendiculum as some call it, could not possibly produce those varieties of bodies which are in the Universe, he supposed therefore the descent not to be in a perpendicular right line, but to decline a little, that so several particles in their descent might make some excursions one upon another. And this *Epicurus* added to *Democritus*; but therein as *Tully* observes, was very unhappy, that where he adds to *Democritus*, *ea quæ corrigere vult, mihi quidem depravare videatur*; that he marr'd what *Democritus* had said, by mending of it. The reason of which motion of declination is thus given by *Lucretius*,

De rerum nat.  
l. 2.

*Quod nisi declinare solerent, omnia deorsum  
Imbris uti guttæ caderent per Inane profundum;  
Nec foret offensus natus, neque plaga creata  
Principiis, ita nil unquam natura creasset.*

It was obvious to object, That, according to the Principles of *Epicurus*, there could have been no concurrence at all of Atoms in  
an



an infinite space, on the two grounds he went on, which were the natural descent of *Atoms*, and the æqui-velocity of the motion of all *Atoms* of what size so ever, which he likewise asserted (although one would think, if gravity were the cause of motion, then the more gravity, the swifter the motion would be) from hence, I say, it were not easie to conceive how the *Atoms* should embrace each other in a parallel line, if they fell down, as *Lucretius* expresseth it, like drops of rain; and therefore they saw a necessity to make their motion decline a little, that so they might jumble and hit one upon another. But this oblique motion of the *Atoms*, though it be the only refuge left to save the origin of things by a concurrence of *Atoms*, is yet as precarious and without reason as any other supposition of theirs whatsoever. *Tully* chargeth this motion of declination with two great faults, futility, and inefficacy, *quæ cum res tota ficta sit pueriliter, tum ne efficit quidem quod vult*. It is a childish fancy and to no purpose: For, first, It is asserted without any reason at all given for it, which is unworthy a *Philosopher*; neither is to any purpose; for if all *Atoms*, saith he, decline in their motion, then none of them will stick together; if some decline, and others do not, this is as precarious as any thing can be imagined, to assign a diversity of motion in indivisible particles, which yet have all the same velocity of motion; and, as *Tully* saith, *Hoc erit quasi provincias atomis dare, quæ recte, quæ oblique ferantur*; as though *Epicurus* were the General at this Rendez-vous of *Atoms*, who stands ready to appoint every one his task and motion. This *Plutarch* tells us was the great charge against *Epicurus*, *ὡς ἀναλυσεν ἐπεισιχόμενον κίνησιν ἀνὰ τὴν μὴ ὄντι*, because he introduced such a motion of declination out of nothing, upon no pretence of reason. And *Turnebus* tells us that the ground why they desired so small a declination, was, because they were conscious to themselves, that it was founded upon no ground of reason; *Et Epicurei sibi consciî culpæ, timide eam ponebant, & minimam sibi postulabant*. To which purpose *Turnebus* cites those Verses of *Lucretius*,

*De Fin. bon. & mal. lib. 1.*

*De Animæ præcreat. è Timæo. Turnebus in Ciceron. de Fato.*

*Quare etiam atque etiam paulum inclinare necesse est  
Corpora, nec plusquam minimum, ne fingere motus  
Obliquos videamur, & id res vera refutet.  
Namque hoc in promptu manifestumque esse videmus,*

*Lib. 2.*

*Pondera*

*Pondera quantum in se est, non posse obliqua meare  
 E supero cum præcipitant, quod cernere possis.  
 Sed nihil omnino recta regione viai  
 Declinare quis est qui possit cernere sese ?*

But this argument of *Lucretius* will hold if at all, further than this little *declination* ( for it is no more they desire than as little as may be imagined, *quo nihil possit fieri minus*, as *Tully* expresseth it ) but if they may *decline* a little, why not a great deal more? nay, it is impossible to conceive, but a little *oblique motion* at first will in an *infinite space* grow to be very *oblique*; for there is nothing to hinder the *motion* which *way* it bends: now if there be never so little *motion* of *declination*, the *Atom* will be inclined that *way*; and what then should hinder, but that the *obliquity* in a *motion* through a great *space* should at last come to be very great; there being no *center* at all to guide the *motion* towards, and the *gravity* not hindring this little *declination*? Therefore *Tully* asks that question, *Cur declinet uno minimo, non declinet duobus aut tribus*? Why only it declines *one minim*, and not *two or three*; for, saith he, *it is no impulsio from any other Atom which makes it decline that one minim*; neither is there any *impediment* in the *space* to hinder it from declining more; so that, as he well saith, *optare hoc quidem est, non disputare*, this is to beg *Hypotheses*, and not to prove them, which is the thing we have proved *Epicurus* to doe. Which was the first thing premised, *viz.* that this *Hypothesis* of *Epicurus* was very *precarious*, and is built on no foundation of reason.

Lib. de Fato.

Sect. 17.

2. It is unsatisfactory and insufficient, as well as *precarious*; for should we grant his two main principles, *Atoms*, and his *Infinite empty space*; yet we deny that ever his *Atoms* with all their *occurrences* would ever produce those things which are in the *Universe*. To run through the noted *Phænomena* of the *Universe*, and to shew how insufficient an account the *Epicureans* are able to give of them, from a *fortuitous concurrence* of *Atoms*, is a task too large to be here undertaken. There are only three things which I shall rather suggest, than *insist* upon, to see what miserable shifts the *Epicureans* are driven to for the *salving* of them, and shall then leave it with the *Reader* to judge, what unmeasurable confidence it is in any to reject the *Creation* of the  
 World



*World* for the sake of the *Epicurean Hypothesis*; and whether it be not the height of *credulity*, as well as *infidelity*, to believe the *world* ever to have been made by a fortuitous *concourse* of *Atoms*.

1. The great variety of appearances in nature, which are attributed to particles of the same nature, only with the alteration of size, shape and motion. That some things in the world, should have no other reason given of them, may not only be tolerable, but rational, as in the objects and operations on the organs of sense, those affections which are mistaken for real qualities, &c. But that all those effects which are seen in nature, should have no other cause but the different configuration and motion of *Atoms*, is the height of folly as well as impiety. To imagine that the particles of matter, as they are in men, should be capable of sensation, memory, intellection, volition, &c. merely because of a different shape, size and motion from what they have in a piece of wood, is a riddle that requires a new configuration of *Atoms* in us to make us understand. May it not be hoped, that at least one time or other by this casual concourse of *Atoms*, the particles may light to be of such a nature in stones, as to make them fly; in plants, to make them all sensitive; and in beasts to make them reason and discourse? What may hinder such a configuration or motion of particles, if all these effects are to be imputed to no higher principle? We see in other bodies what different appearances are caused by a sudden alteration of the particles of the matter of which they are compounded; why may it not fall out so in the things mentioned? Neither can this be unreasonable to demand. 1. Because the motion of these particles of matter is casual still according to them; and who knows what chance may do? for the seminal principles themselves are, I suppose, according to them of the same uniform matter with the rest of the world, and so are liable to different motion and configuration. 2. Because all particles of matter are supposed to be in continual motion, because of that disseminated Vacuity which is presumed to be in the world, and because a Coacervate Vacuity is not only asserted as possible, but as probably existent: I assume only then (that which is insisted on as probable) viz. that that space which lies between our Atmosphere and the Stars is empty of any

other thing, but only the *rays* of the *Stars* which pass through it ; I then supposing it a *vacuity*, whether would not the *particles* of those *bodies* which lie *contiguous* to that *space* presently *dislodge* from the *bodies* wherein they are, and begin a new *Rendezvous* of *Atoms*, there ? for all *Atoms* are supposed to be in *perpetual motion* ; and the cause assigned, why in *solid bodies* they do not fly away, is because of the *repercussion* of other *Atoms*, that when they once begin to *stir*, they receive such *knocks* as make them *quiet* in their places. Now this cannot hold in the *bodies contiguous* to this *space* ; for both those *bodies* are more *fluid*, and so there is no such *knocking* of *particles* to keep them at *rest* ; but which is more, those which are *contiguous* have nothing at all to hinder them from *motion*, and so those *particles* will necessarily *remove* into that *empty space* where there is no *impediment* of their *motion*, and so the next *Atoms* to those must *remove*, because that *space* wherein the other were is made *empty* by their *removal* ; and so the next, and so on, till not only the *air*, but the *whole mass* of the *earth* will on *supposition* of such a *vacuity* be dissolved into its first *particles*, which will all *mutiny* in the several *bodies* wherein they are, and never *rest* till they come to that *empty space*, where they may again *Rendezvous* together. So dangerous is the news of *Liberty*, or of an *empty space* to these *Democratical particles* of the *Universe*. Neither can I see how a *disseminated vacuity* can *salve* the difficulty ; for those *particles* of the most *solid bodies*, being in continual *motion*, and the *ground* of their *union* being *repercussion*, it thence follows that towards that *part* where the *disseminated vacuum* is, the *particles* meeting with no such *strokes* may fairly take their leaves of the *bodies* they are in, and so one succeed in the place of another, till the *configuration* of the whole be altered, and consequently different *appearances* and *effects* may be caused in the same *bodies*, though it results from *seminal principles*. So that according to the *Atomical principles*, no rational account can be given of those *effects* which are seen in nature. This *Dionysius* in *Eusebius* urgeth against the *Atomists*, that from the same *principles* without evident *reason* given for it, they make of the same *uniform matter* some things *conspicuous* to sense, others not, some *short-lived*, others *extreamly long-lived*. Τίνα ὃ τρέφον  
μιάς



μᾶς ἕως καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς ἀπασάν ἑσίας, καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς ἀφάστε φύσεως, πλὴν ἥς  
μεγέθων, ὡς φασι, καὶ ἥς σχημάτων, τὰ μὲν ἔστι θεῖα καὶ ἀκήρυτα καὶ  
αἰώνια, ὡς αὐτοὶ φήσασιν εἶναι, σώματα, ἢ μακροαἰωνά γε καὶ ἢ ὥστε  
ὄνουνδοντα, φαινόμενά τε καὶ ἀφανῆ; *What ground can there be as-  
signed of so vast a difference between things if they all be of the  
same nature, and differ only in size and shape? saith that ex-  
cellent person, who there with a great deal of eloquence lays  
open the folly of the Atomical Philosophy, θαυμασὴ γε ἥ ἀπέ-  
μων, ἡ δημοκρατία δεξιμερῶν τε ἀλλήλας ἥ φίλων καὶ περιπλεκο-  
μένων εἰς μίαν τε κατασκληρὴν συνοικίαν ἐπιχειρμένων.* It is a rare  
*Democracy of Atoms*, saith he, where the friendly *Atoms* meet  
and embrace each other, and from thence forward live in the  
closest society together.

2. Not only the variety, but the exact order and beauty of  
the world is a thing unaccountable by the Atomical hypothe-  
sis. Were the whole world still a *Hesiod's Chaos* (from the  
consideration of which *Diogenes Laertius* tells us *Epicurus* Laert. l. 10.  
began to *Philosophize*) we might probably believe an agitation  
of particles (supposing matter created) might settle it in such  
a confused manner; but that there should be nothing else but  
a blind impetus of *Atoms* to produce those vast and most  
regular motions of the heavenly bodies, to order the passage  
of the *Sun* for so great conveniency of nature, and for the  
alternate succession of the seasons of the year, which should  
cut such channels for the *Ocean*, and keep that vast body of  
the water (whose surface is higher than the earth) from  
overflowing it, which should furnish the earth with such se-  
minal and prolifick principles, as to provide food and nourish-  
ment for those *Animals* which live upon it, and furnish out  
every thing necessary for the comfort and delight of mans life;  
to believe I say, that all these things came only from a blind  
and fortuitous concurrence of *Atoms*, is the most prodigious piece  
of credulity and folly, that humane nature is subject to. But this  
part which concerns the order and beauty of the parts of the  
*Universe*, and the argument thence, that it could be no blind  
fortuitous principle, but an *Infinitely wise God*, hath been so  
fully and judiciously handled by a learned Person already, that  
*I* shall rather choose to refer the Reader to his discourse than  
insist any more upon it.

D. H. More  
*Antid. against*  
*Atheism*, part  
2.

3. *The production of mankind* is a thing which the *Atomists* are most shamefully puzzled with, as well as the *Formation* of the *internal parts* of mans *body*, of which I have already spoken in the precedent Chapter. It would pity one to see what lamentable shifts the *Atomists* are put to, to find out a way for the production of mankind, viz That our teeming mother the earth, at last cast forth some kind of bags like wombs upon the surface of the earth, and these by degrees breaking, at last came out children, which were nourished by a kind of juyce of the earth like milk, by which they were brought up till they came to be men. Oh what will not Atheists believe rather than a Deity and Providence ! But lest we should seem to wrong the *Atomists*, hear what *Censorinus* saith of *Epicurus* ; *Is enim credidit limo calefactos uteros nescio quos radicibus terræ cohærentes, primum increvisse, & infantibus, ex se editis ingenitum lactis humorem, natura ministrante præbuisse ; quos ita educatos & adultos, genus humanum propagasse.* But because *Lucretius* may be thought to speak more impartially in the case, how rarely doth he describe it ?

*Censor. de die  
Nat. c. 2.*

*Crescebant uteri terræ radicibus apti,  
Quos ubi tempore maturo patefecerit ætas  
Infantum, fugiens humorem, aurasque petissens,  
Convertebat ibi natura foramina terræ,  
Et succum venis cogebat fundere apertis  
Consimilem lactis ; sicut nunc fœmina quæque  
Quum peperit dulci repletur lacte, quod omnis  
Impetus in mammas convertitur ille alimenti :  
Terra cibum pueris, vestem vapor, herba cubile  
Præbebat, multa & molli lanugine abundans.*

Had *Lucretius* been only a Poet, this might have passed for a handsomly described *Fable* : but to deliver it for a piece of *Philosophy*, makes it the greater *Mythology* : that man's body was formed out of the earth we believe, because we have reason so to do ; but that the earth should cast forth such folliculi, as he expresseth it, and that men should be brought up in such a way as he describes, deserves a place among the most incredible of *Poetical Fables*. But if Poets must be credited, how much more like a man did he speak, who told us,

*Natus*



*Natus homo est ; sive hanc divino semine fecit  
Ille opifex rerum, Mundi melioris origo ;  
Sive recens tellus, seductaque nuper ab alto  
Æthere, cognati retinebat semina cæli ;  
Quam satus Iapeto mistam fluvialibus undis,  
Finxit in effigiem moderantum cuncta Deorum.*

Thus have we considered the *Epicurean Hypothesis*, both as to the *Principles* on which it stands, and the *suitableness* of it to the *Phænomena* of the *Universe*; and I suppose now there cannot be the least *shadow of reason* found from the *Atomical Philosophy* to make us at all *Question* that account of the *Origin* of the *Universe*, which ascribes it not to the *fortuitous concurrence* of *Atoms*, but to the *Infinite wisdom* of a *Deity*. I conclude then this discourse of the *Epicurean Hypothesis* with the words of *Autemedon* in the *Greek Epigram*.

Ταῦτ' εἰδὼς, σὺρὸς ἰδὲ, μάτῳ δ' Ἐπίκουρον ἔαρον  
Πᾶ τὸ κενὸν ζῆσεῖν, καὶ τίνας αἱ μωαδες.

*Antholog. l. 1.  
s. 15.*

*Learn to be wise ; let Epicurus chafe  
To find his Atoms, and his empty space.*

I come now to the *last Hypothesis* mentioned, which undertakes to give an account of the *Origin* of the *Universe* from the mere *Mechanical Laws* of *motion* and *matter*. Which is the *Hypothesis* of the late famous *French Philosopher* *M. Des Cartes*. For although there be as much *reason* as *charity* to believe that he never intended his *Hypothesis* as a foundation of *Atheism*, having made it so much his business to assert the *existence* of a *Deity* and *immateriality* of the *soul*; yet because it is apt to be *abused* to that end by persons *Atheistically* disposed, because of his ascribing so much to the *power* of *matter*: we shall therefore so far consider it as it undertakes to give an account of the *Origin* of the *Universe* without a *Deity*. His *Hypothesis* therefore is briefly this. He takes it for granted, that all the *matter* of the *world* was at first of one *Uniform nature*, *divisible* into innumerable *parts*, and divided into many, which were all in *motion*: from hence he

*Sec. 12.*

*Princip. p. 3.  
Art. 46. &c.*

supposeth,

supposeth, 1. That all the matter of which the Universe is composed, was at first divided into equal particles of an indifferent size, and that they had all such a motion as is now found in the world. 2. That all those particles were not at first Spherical, because many such little Globes joyned together will not fill up a continued space, but that of whatever figure they were at first, they would by continued motion become spherical, because they would have various circular motions; for seeing that at first they were moved with so great force that one particle would be disjoyned from the other, the same force continuing would serve to cut off all angles which are supposed in them, by their frequent occurrences against each other; and so when the angles were cut off, they would become spherical. 3. He supposeth that no space is left empty, but when those round particles being joyned, leave some intervals between them, there are some more subtile particles of matter, which are ready to fill up those void spaces, which arise from those angles which were cut off from the other particles to make them spherical; which fragments of particles are so little, and acquire thereby such a celerity of motion, that by the force of that, they will be divided into innumerable little fragments, and so will fill up all those spaces which other particles could not enter in at. 4. That those particles which fill up the intervals between the spherical ones, have not all of them the same celerity of motion, because some of them are more undivided than others are, which filled up the space between three Globular particles when their angles were cut off, and therefore those particles must necessarily have very angular figures, which are unfit for motion, and thence it comes to pass that such particles easily stick together, and transferr the greatest part of their motion upon those other particles which are less, and therefore have a swifter motion; and because these particles are to pass through such triangular spaces which lie in the midst of three Globular particles touching each other, therefore he supposeth them as to their breadth and depth to be of a triangular figure, but because these particles are somewhat long; and the globular particles through which they pass with so swift motion have their rotation about the poles of the Heavens, thence he supposes that those triangular particles come to be wreathed. Now from these things being thus supposed, Des Cartes hath ingenuously and  
consonantly



consonantly to his *principles* undertaken to give an account of the most noted *Phænomena* of the *world* and those three *sorts of particles* mentioned, he makes to be his three *elements*; the *first* is that *subtile matter* which was supposed to arise from the *cuttings* off the *angles* of the *greater particles*; and of this he tells us the *Sun* and *fixed Stars* consist, as those *particles* of that *subtile matter* being in continual *motion* have made those several *vortices* or *athereal whirlpools*. The *second element* consists of the *spherical particles* themselves, which make up the *Heavens*; out of the *third element*, which are those *wreathed particles*, he gives an account of the *formation* of the *earth*, and *Planets*, and *Comets*; and from all of them by the help of those common *affections* of *matter*, *size*, *figure*, *motion*, &c. he undertakes to give an account of the *Phænomena* of the *world*. How far his *principles* do conduce to the giving mens minds satisfaction, as to the particular *Phænomena* of *nature*, is not here our *business* to enquire, but only how far these *principles* can give an account of the *Origin* of the *Universe* without a *Deity*? And that it cannot give a satisfactory account how the world was framed without a *Deity*, appears by the two *grand suppositions* on which all his *elements* depend, both which cannot be from any other principle but *God*. Those are, 1. *The existence of matter* in the world which we have already proved cannot be independent on *God*, and necessarily *existent*; and therefore supposing that *matter* *existent* and put into *motion*, would grind it self into those several *particles* by him supposed, yet this cannot give any account of the *Origin* of the *Universe* without a *Deity*. 2. *The motion of the particles of matter* supposeth a *Deity*; for *matter* is no *self-moving principle*, as hath been fully demonstrated in several places by that judicious *Philosopher*, Dr. H. More, who plainly manifests that if *motion* did necessarily belong to *matter*, it were impossible there should be *Sun*, or *Stars*, or *Earth*, or *Man* in the *World*; for the *matter* being *uniform*, it must have equal *motion* in all its *particles*, if *motion* doth belong to it. For *motion* being supposed to be *natural* and *essential* to *matter*, must be *alike* every where in it, and therefore every *particle* must be supposed in *motion* to its utmost capacity, and so every *particle* is *alike* and *moved alike*: and therefore there being no *prevalency* at all

*Antidote b. 2. ch. 1. Immortality of the soul. b. 1. c. 11. f. 3. &c. Ep. 3. ad Car- tes. p. 88.*

in any one particle above another in *bigness* or *motion*, it is manifest that this *universal matter*, to whom *motion* is so *essential* and *natural*, will be *ineffectual* for the producing of any *variety* of *appearances* in *nature*; for nothing could be *caused* by this *thin* and *subtile matter*, but what would be wholly *imperceptible* to any of our *senses*: and what a *strange kind* of *visible world* would this be? From hence then it *appears* that there must be an infinitely *powerful* and *wise God*, who must both put *matter* into *motion*, and *regulate* the *motion* of it, in order to the producing all those *varieties* which appear in the *World*. And this *necessity* of the *motion* of *matter* by a *power* given it from *God* is freely acknowledged by Mr. Des Cartes himself in these words; *Con-*  
*Resp. ad ep. 3. fidero materiam sibi libere permissam, & nullum aliunde im-*  
*H. Mori. p. 104. pulsum suscipientem, ut plane quiescentem; illa autem impelli-*  
*tur à Deo, tantundem motus sive translationis in ea conser-*  
*vante quantum ab initio posuit.* So that this great improver and discoverer of the *Mechanical power* of *matter*, doth freely confess the necessity not only of *God's* giving *motion* in order to the *Origin* of the *Universe* but of his *conserving motion* in it for the *upholding* it: So that we need not fear from this *Hypothesis* the *excluding* of a *Deity* from being the *prime efficient cause* of the world. All the question then is concerning the particular *manner*, which was used by *God* as the *efficient cause* in giving being to the world. As to which I shall only in general suggest what *Maimonides* says of it. *Omnia simul*  
*More Nevoch. l. 2. c. 30. creata erant, & postea successive ab invicem separata; altho'*  
*Physic. f. 1. l. 7. I am somewhat inclinable to that of Gassendus, majus est*  
*c. 6. mundus opus, quam ut assequi mens humana illius molitionem*  
*possit: To which I think may be well applyed that speech*  
*of Solomon; Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man*  
*cannot find out the work that is done under the Sun: because*  
*Eccl. 8. 17. though a man labour to seek it out, yea further, though a wise*  
*man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.*



## C H A P. III.

## Of the Origin of Evil.

*Of the Being of Providence. Epicurus his arguments against it refuted. The necessity of the belief of Providence in order to Religion. Providence proved from a consideration of the nature of God and the things of the world. Of the Spirit of nature. The great objections against Providence propounded. The first concerns the Origin of evil. God cannot be the Author of sin if the Scriptures be true. The account which the Scriptures give of the fall of man, doth not charge God with man's fault. God's power to govern man by Laws, though he gives no particular reason of every positive Precept. The reason of God's creating man with freedom of will, largely shewed from Simplicius; and the true account of the Origin of evil. God's permitting the fall makes him not the Author of it. The account which the Scriptures give of the Origin of evil compared with that of Heathen Philosophers. The antiquity of the opinion of ascribing the Origin of evil to an evil principle. Of the judgment of the Persians, Ægyptians, and others, about it. Of Manichæism. The opinion of the ancient Greek Philosophers; of Pythagoras, Plato, the Stoicks; the Origin of evil not from the necessity of matter. The remainders of the history of the fall among the Heathens. Of the malignity of Dæmons. Providence vindicated as to the sufferings of the good, and impunity of bad men. An account of both from natural light, manifested by Seneca, Plutarch, and others.*

**I**T being now manifested not only that there is a God, but that the world had its Being from him; it thence follows by an easie and rational Deduction, that there is a particular band of Divine providence, which upholds the world in its Being, and wisely disposeth all events in it. For it is a most irrational and absurd opinion to assert a Deity and deny providence: and in nothing did Epicurus more discover the weakness and puerility of his judgment than in this. Indeed, if Epicurus had no other design in asserting a Deity, than (as many ancient

Sect. I.

*Philosophers* imagined) to avoid the *imputation* of direct *Atheism*; and yet to take away all *foundations* of *Religion*, he must needs be said to *serve* his *Hypothesis* well, though he did assert the *Being* of an *excellent* nature which he called *God*; while yet he made *him* fit as it were with his *elbows folded up* in the *Heavens*, and taking no *cognizance* of humane actions. For he well knew, that if the *belief* of *Divine Providence* were once *rooted out* of men's minds, the thoughts of an *excellent Being* above the *Heavens*, would have no more awe or power upon the *hearts* and *lives* of men, than the telling men that there are *jewels* of *inestimable value* in the *Indies*, makes them more ready to pay *taxes* to their *Princes*. For that *Philosopher* could not be ignorant, that it is not *worth* but *power*, nor *speculation* but *interest* that rules the *world*. The poor *Tenant* more regards his petty *Landlord*, than the greatest *Prince* in the *world* that hath nothing to *doe* with him; and he thinks he hath great reason for it; for he neither *fears punishment* nor *hopes* for *reward* from him; whereas his *Landlord* may dispossess him of all he hath upon *displeasure*, and may advantage him the most if he gains his *favour*: Supposing then that there were such an *excellent Being* in the *world* which was compleatly happy in himself, and thought it an *impairing* of his *happiness* to trouble himself with an *inspection* of the *world*; *Religion* might then be indeed derived *à relegendò*, but not *à religando*; there might be some *pleasure* in contemplating his nature, but there could be no *obligation* to *obedience*. So that *Epicurus* was the first *founder* of a *kind* of *Philosophical Antinomianism*, placing all *Religion* in a *veneration* of the *Deity* purely for its own *excellency* without any such *mercenary eye* (as those who *serve God* for their own ends, as they say, are apt to have) to *reward* and *punishment*. And I much doubt that good woman whom the *story* goes of, who in an *Enthusiastick posture* ran up and down the *streets* with *emblems* in her hands, *fire* in the one, as she said, to *burn up Heaven*, and *water* in the other, to *quench Hell*, that men might *serve God* purely for himself, would, if she had compassed her design, soon have brought *Profelytes* enough to *Epicurus*, and by *burning Heaven* would have *burnt up* the *cords* of *Religion*, and in *quenching Hell* would have *extinguished* the *awe* and *fear* of a *Deity* in the *world*. Indeed the incomparable

*excellency.*



*excellency and perfection which is in the Divine Nature, to spirits advanced to a noble and generous height in Religion, makes them exceedingly value their choice; while they disregard whatever rivals with God for it; but were it not for those Magnetical books of obedience and eternal interest, there are few would be drawn to a due consideration of, much less a delight in so amiable and excellent a nature. And it is impossible to conceive, why God in the revelation of his Will should ever so much as mention a future punishment, or promise an eternal reward, were not the consideration of these things the sinews of Religion.*

Which they whose design was to undermine the very foundations on which all Religion was built, understood far better, than those weak pretended *advancers* of Religion, who while in such a way they pretend to advance it, do only blow it up. For if men ought not to have an eye and respect to their own future condition, nor serve God on the account of his power to make our souls miserable or happy, much less ought men to serve God with any regard to his Providence, since the matters which Providence is employed about in this world, are of infinitely less moment, than those which concern our future state. And if we are to have no eye on Divine providence in the exercise of Religion, we shall scarce be able to understand for what end God should take so much care of mankind, and manifest so much of his goodness to them, were it not to quicken them in their search after him, and excite them to the more chearfull obedience to him. And when once we question to what end God troubles himself with the world, we are come next door to Epicurus, and may in few steps more delight in the flowers of his Garden. For this was his strongest plea against Providence, that it was beneath the Majesty and Excellency of the Divine nature to stoop so low, and trouble himself so far, as to regard what was done on earth. This being one of his *Ratæ Sententiæ*, or *Uncubred Maxims*, *Τὸ μακρότερον καὶ ἀφθάρστον ἔστι τὸ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τὸ θεοῦ, ἢ τὸ ἀθάνατον καὶ ἀφθάρστον, ὅτι ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὸν θεόν, ὁ θεὸς οὐδὲν παρὰ τὸν θεόν, ὁ θεὸς οὐδὲν παρὰ τὸν θεόν.* *Diog. Laert. l. 10.* *The blessed and immortal Being, neither hath any employment himself, nor troubles himself with others.* Which as *Maximus Tyrius* well observes, is rather a description of a *Sardanapalus*, than a *Deity*; nay, of a worse than a *Sardanapalus*; for he in the midst of all his *softness* and *effeminacy* would yet entertain some counsels for the *safety* and *good*

*Secl. 2.*

*Diog. Laert. l. 10.*

*Dissert. 29.*

Tully de Finib.  
 l. 1. De Nat.  
 Deor. lib. 2.  
 Plutarch. ad-  
 vers. Colot.

of his *Empire* ; but *Epicurus* his *Deity* is of so tender a nature, that the least thought of *business* would quite spoil his happiness. This opinion of *Epicurus* made the more raised-spirited *Moralists* so far condemn the unworthy apprehensions which he entertained of the *Divine nature*, that they degraded him from the very title of a *Philosopher* in it, and ranked him beneath the most fabulous *Poets*, who had writ such unworthy things of their *Gods*, as is evident by the censures which *Tully*, *Plutarch*, and others, pass upon him for this very opinion. And they tell him that some of their own *men* were of a more noble and excellent spirit than *Epicurus* his *Deity*, who abhorred softness and idleness, and made it their greatest delight to do good to their *Countries*. But *Epicurus* must needs make his *God* of his own humour (the usual flattery which men bear to themselves, to think that most excellent which they delight in most) as *Xenophanes* was wont to say of his horse, if he were to describe a *God*, it would be with a curled main, a broad chest, &c. and in every thing like himself. Had *Epicurus* himself so little of an *Athenian* in him, as not to make it some part of his delight to understand the affairs of the world? or at least, did he take no pleasure in the walks of his famous garden, nor to order his trees, and set his flowers, and contrive every thing for his own delight? Would *Epicurus* then count this a part of his happiness? and is it inconsistent with the happiness of the *Deity* to take notice of the world and order all things in it for his own glory? Must so excellent a nature as *God's* was, by his own acknowledgment, be presently tired with business, when the more excellent any nature is, the more active and vigorous it is, the more able to comprehend and dispatch matters of moment with the least disturbance to its self? Is it pleasure to a Nurse to fill the child with her milk? doth the Sun rejoice to help the world with his constant light? and doth a Fountain murmur till it be delivered of its streams which may refresh the ground? and is it no delight to the *Divine nature* to behold the effects of his goodness upon the world? We see here then the foundation on which *Epicurus* went, viz. that his *God* must be like himself, or there must be none; and truly he might more suitably to his principles question his existence, than supposing his existence deny his Providence on such miserable accounts as these are, which yet are the chief which  
 either



either *Epicurus* or *Lucretius* could bring against it, from the consideration of the *Divine nature*.

Sect. 3.

The which to any one who considers it, doth necessarily *infer* a peculiar eye and hand of *Providence* in the world. For can we imagine that a *Being* of *Infinite knowledge* should be ignorant of what is *done* in the world? and of *Infinite power*, should stand by and leave things to chance and fortune? which were at first contrived and brought into *Being* by the contrivance of his *Wisdom*, and exercise of his *Power*. And where the foundation of existence lies wholly and solely in the power of an *Infinite Being* producing, the ground of continuance of that existence must lie in the same power conserving. When men indeed effect any thing, the work may continue, whatever become of him that did it; but the reason of that is, because what man doth, is out of matter already existent, and his work is only setting materials together; but now what God effects, he absolutely gives a *Being* to, and therefore its duration depends on his conservation. What is once in its *Being*. I grant, will continue till some greater force than its self put it out of *Being*; but withall I add, that God's withdrawing his Conservation is so great a force, as must needs put that *Being* which had its existence from his power, out of the condition it was in by it. The *Light* of the *Sun* continues in the air, and as long as the *Sun* communicates it, nothing can extinguish the light, but what will put out the *Sun*: but could we suppose the *Sun* to withdraw his beams, what becomes of the light then? This is the case of all *Beings*, which come from an *Infinite power*; their subsistence depends on a continual emanation of the same power which gave them *Being*: and when once this is withdrawn, all those *Beings* which were produced by this power must needs relapse into nothing. Besides, what dependence is there upon each other in the moments of the duration of any created *Being*? The mode of existence in a creature is but contingent and possible, and nothing is implied in the notion of an existent creature, beyond mere possibility of existence: what is it then which gives actual existence to it? that cannot be its self: for it would be necessarily existent: if another then gives existence, this existence must wholly depend upon him who gave it: for nothing can continue existence to its self, but what may give it to its self, ( for it gives it for the

the moment it continues it) and what gives existence to its self, must necessarily exist, which is repugnant to the very notion of a created Being: So that either we must deny a possibility of non-existence, or annihilation in a creature, which follows upon necessity of existence, or else we must assert that the duration or continuance of a creature in its Being doth immediately depend on Divine Providence and Conservation, which is with as much reason as frequency said to be a continued Creation. But yet further: was an Infinite Wisdom and Power necessary to put things into that order they are in? and is not the same necessary for the governing of them? I cannot see any reason to think that the power of matter when set in motion, should either bring things into that exquisite order and dependence which the parts of the world have upon each other: much less that by the mere force of that first motion all things should continue in the state they are in. Perpetual motion is yet one of the desiderata of the world: the most exquisite Mechanism cannot put an engine beyond the necessity of being looked after: can we then think this dull, unactive matter, merely by the force of its first motion should be able still to produce the effects which are seen in the world, and to keep it from tumbling, at least by degrees, into its pristine Chaos? It was an Infinite Power, I grant, which gave that first motion; but that it gave power to continue that motion till the Conflagration of the world, remains yet to be proved. Some therefore finding that in the present state of the world, matter will not serve for all the noted and common Phænomena of the world, have called in the help of a Spirit of Nature, which may serve instead of a Man-midwife to matter, to help her in her production of things. Or, as though God had a plurality of worlds to look after, they have taken care to substitute him a Vicar in this, which is the Spirit of Nature. But we had rather believe God himself to be perpetually resident in the world, and that the Power which gives life, and being, and motion to every thing in the world, is nothing else but his own providence; especially since we have learnt from himself, that it is in him we live and move and have our being.

Acts 17. 28.

Sect. 4.

Thus then we see a necessity of asserting Divine Providence whether we consider the Divine Nature, or the Phænomena of the world; but yet the case is not so clear but there are



are two *grand objections* behind, which have been the continual exercise of the *wits* of *inquisitive* men almost in all Ages of the world. The one concerns the first *origin* of *evil*; the other concerns the *dispensations* of *providence*, whence it comes to pass that good men fare so hard in the world, when the bad triumph and flourish; if these *two* can be cleared with any *satisfaction* to *reason*, it will be the highest *vindication* of *Divine Providence*, and a great evidence of the *Divinity* of the *Scriptures*, which gives us such clear light and direction in these profound *speculations*, which the dim reason of man was so much to seek in.

I begin with the *origin* of *evil*; for, if there be a hand of *providence* which orders all things in the world, how comes evil then into it, without God's being the Author of it? Which is a speculation of as great depth as necessity, it highly concerning us to entertain the highest apprehensions of God's holiness, and how far he is from being the author of sin; and it is likewise a matter of some difficulty so to explain the origin of evil as to make it appear that God is not the author of it. I

easily then assent to what Origen saith on this subject, when Celsus upon some mistaken places of Scripture, had charged the Scripture with laying the origin of evil upon God; *Origen. c. Cels. l. 4. p. 207.*

εἰπερ ἔν ἅλλῳ τις τόπος ἦν ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἑξελείσθως δεινότητος, οὐδ' ἕτερος ὅτι τῇ φύσει ἡμῶν, ἐν τέλει καὶ ἡ τοῦ κακοῦ παχύνειν ἐν χρεῖσι. If any thing which calls for our enquiry be of difficult investigation, that which concerns the origin of evils is such a thing;

and as Simplicius well begins his discourse on this subject; *Comment. in Epictet. c. 34.*

εἰ τ' ὑποστάτως ἦν κακοῦ ὁ λόγος καὶ καλῶς διορθώσις, καὶ τ' περὶ τὸ δεῖον ἀσεβείας αἰτιῶν γέρονε, καὶ τ' ἡ τοῦ ἡδῶν εὐαγορίας τὰς ἀρχαὶς διείραξε, καὶ πολλὰς καὶ ἀλύτους ἀπορίας ἐπέβαλε τὰς καλῶς αἰτιολογώντας αὐτῷ. The dispute concerning the nature and origin of evil, not being well stated, is the cause of great impiety towards God, and perverts the principles of good life, and involves them in innumerable perplexities who are not able to give a rational account of it. So much then is it our great concernment to fix on sure grounds in the resolution of this important question; in which I intend not to lanch out into the depth and intricacies of it, as it relates to any internal purposes of God's will, (which is beyond our present scope) but I shall only take that account of it which the Scripture plainly gives in relating

ting the fall of the first man. For the clearing of which I shall proceed in this method :

1. *That if the Scriptures be true, God cannot be the Author of sin.*

2. *That the account which the Scripture gives of the origin of evil, doth not charge it upon God.*

3. *That no account given by Philosophers of the origin of evil, is so clear and rational as this is.*

4. *That the most material circumstances of this account are attested by the Heathens themselves.*

1. *That if the Scriptures be true, God cannot be the author of sin.* For if the Scriptures be true, we are bound without hesitation to yield our assent to them in their plain and direct affirmations, and there can be no ground of suspending assent, as to any thing which pretends to be a Divine Truth, but the want of certain evidence, whether it be of Divine Revelation or no. No doubt it would be one of the most effectual ways to put an end to the numerous controversies of the Christian world (especially to those bold disputes concerning the method and order of God's decrees) if the plain and undoubted assertions of Scripture were made the Rule and Standard, whereby we ought to judge of such things as are more obscure and ambiguous. And could men but rest contented with those things which concern their eternal happiness. and the means in order to it ( which on that account are written with all imaginable perspicuity in Scripture ) and the moment of all other controversies be judged by their reference to these, there would be fewer controversies and more Christians in the world. Now there are two grand principles which concern men's eternal condition, of which we have the greatest certainty from Scripture, and on which we may with safety rely, without perplexing our minds about those more nice and subtle speculations ( which it may be are incapable of all full and particular resolution ) and those are, *That the ruin and destruction of man is wholly from himself; and, That his salvation is from God alone.* If then man's ruin and misery be from himself; which the Scripture doth so much inculcate on all occasions; then without controversy that which is the cause of all the misery of humane nature, is wholly from himself too, which is, *sin.* So that if the main scope and design of the Scripture be true, God cannot be



be the Author of *that*, by which (without the intervention of the mercy of God) man's misery *unavoidably* falls upon him. For with what *Authority* and *Majesty* doth God in the *Scripture* forbid all manner of sin? with what *earnestness* and *importunity* doth he *woo* the sinner to forsake his sin? with what *loathing* and *detestation* doth he *mention* sin? with what *justice* and *severity* doth he *punish* sin? with what *wrath* and *indignation* doth he *threaten* contumacious sinners? And is it possible, (after all this and much more, recorded in the *Scriptures*, to express the *holiness* of God's nature, his *hatred* of sin, and his *appointing* a day of judgment for the solemn punishment of sinners) to imagine that the *Scriptures* do in the least ascribe the *Origin* of evil to God, or make him the *Author* of Sin? Shall not the judge of all the world do right? will a God of *Infinite Justice*, *Purity*, and *Holiness*, punish the sinner for that which himself was the cause of? Far be such unworthy thoughts from our apprehensions of a *Deity*, much more of that God whom we believe to have declared his mind so much to the contrary, that we cannot believe *that* and the *Scriptures* to be true together.

Taking it then for granted in the general, that God cannot be the Author of sin, we come to enquire, whether the account which the Scripture gives of the Origin of evil, doth any way charge it upon God? There are only two ways, according to the history of the fall of man recorded in Scripture, whereby men may have any ground to question whether God were the cause of man's fall; either first, by the giving him that positive Law, which was the occasion of his fall; or secondly, by leaving him to the liberty of his own will. First, The giving of that positive Law cannot be the least ground of laying man's fault on God; because, 1. It was most suitable to the nature of a rational creature to be governed by Laws, or declarations of the Will of his Maker: For considering man as a free agent, there can be no way imagined so consonant to the nature of man as this was, because thereby he might declare his obedience to God to be the matter of his free choice. For where there is a capacity of reward, and punishment, and acting in the consideration of them, there must be a declaration of the will of the Law-giver, according to which man may expect either his reward or punishment. If it were sui-

Seet. 5.

2.

table to God's nature to promise *life to man upon obedience*, it was not *unsuitable* to it to expect *obedience to every declaration of his will*; considering the *absolute sovereignty and dominion* which God had over man as being his creature, and the *indispensible obligation* which was in the nature of man to obey whatever his *Maker* did command him. So that God had *full and absolute right* to require from man, what he did as to the *Law* which he gave him to obey; and in the general we cannot conceive, how there should be a *testimony of man's obedience towards his Creator*, without some declaration of his Creator's Will. Secondly, God had *full power and authority*, not only to govern man by *Laws*, but to determine man's general obligation to obedience to that particular positive precept by the breach of which man fell. If God's power over man was *universal and unlimited*, what reason can there be to imagine it should not extend to such a *positive Law*? Was it, because the *matter of this Law seemed too low for God to command his creature*? but whatever the *matter of the Law* was, *obedience to God* was the great end of it, which man had testified as much in that *Instance* of it as in any other whatsoever; and in the *violation* of it were implied the highest aggravations of *disobedience*; for God's power and authority was as much contemned, his goodness slighted, his Truth and faithfulness questioned, his Name dishonoured, his Majesty affronted in the breach of that, as of any other *Law* whatsoever it had been. If the *Law* were easie to be observed, the greater was the *sin of disobedience*; if the *weight of the matter* was not so great in its self, yet God's authority added the greatest weight to it; and the ground of obedience is not to be fetched from the nature of the thing required, but from the authority of the *Legislator*. Or was it then because God concealed from man his counsel in giving of that *positive precept*? Hath not then a *Legislator* power to require any thing, but what he satisfies every one of his reason in commanding it? if so, what becomes of *obedience and subjection*? it will be impossible to make any *probative precepts* on this account; and the *Legislator* must be charged with the *disobedience* of his subjects, where he doth not give a particular account of every thing which he requires; which as it concerns humane Legislators (who have not that absolute power and authority which God hath)



hath) is contrary to all *Laws* of *Policy* and the general sense of the world. This *Plutarch* gives a good account of, when he discourseth so rationally of the sobriety which men ought to use in their inquiries into the grounds and reasons of God's actions; for, saith he, *Physicians will give prescriptions without giving the Patient a particular reason of every circumstance in them*: ἡ δὲ ὁ ἀνθρώποι νόμος πείθει, τὸ εὐλογον ἀπλῶς ἔχει καὶ πάντε φαίνοντον, ἀλλ' ὅ καὶ νομοῖ καλοῖα ἢ παραγμάτων. Neither have humane *Laws* always apparent reason for them, nay some of them, are to appearance ridiculous; for which he instanceth in that *Law* of the *Lacedæmonian Ephori*, καὶ τρεῖς μύστικα, to which no other reason was annexed but this, καὶ πειθεσθαι τοῖς νόμοις ὡς καὶ χαλεποὶ δύνανται: they commanded every *Magistrate* at the entrance of his office to shave himself, and gave this reason for it, that they might learn to obey *Laws* themselves. He further instanceth, in the *Roman* custom of *manumission*, their *Laws* about testaments, *Solon's Law* against neutrality in seditions, and concludes thence, καὶ ὅπως πολλὰς ἀν τὴν ἐξέειπον νόμον ἀπείας, μήτε ἢ λόγον ἔχον τὸ νομοθετεῖν, μήτε τὴν αἰτίαν συνιέναι ἐκαστὸν ἢ γενομένην. Any one would easily find many absurdities in *Laws*, who doth not consider the intention of the *Legislator*, or the ground of what he requires. Τι δὲ θαυμάσεν, saith he, εἰ τὸ ἀνθρώπων ἔπος ἡμῶν ὄντων διδασκλήτων, ἐκ εὐπορόν ἐστι τὸ περὶ τῶν θεῶν εἰπεῖν, ὅτι πῶς λόγῳ τὸς ἀνθρώπων, τὸς δὲ περὶ τῶν ἀμαρτανόντων κολάζουσιν. What wonder is it if we are so puzzled to give an account of the actions of men, that we should be to seek as to those of the Deity? This cannot be then any ground on the account of mere reason, to lay the charge of man's disobedience upon God, because he required from him the observance of that positive command of not eating of the forbidden fruit.

The only thing then left, is, whether God be not liable to this charge as he left man to the liberty of his will: And that may be grounded on two things; either that God did not create man in such a condition, in which it had been impossible for him to have sinned; or that knowing his temptation he did not give him power to resist it. If neither of these will lay any Imputation of the Origin of evil upon God, then God will appear to be wholly free from it. First, concerning man's being created a free agent; if the determination of the Schools be good, that possibility of sinning is implied in the very notion of a

*Vid. Thom. 1. p. creature*; and consequently that *impeccability* is repugnant to the nature of a created Being; then we see a necessary reason, why man was created in a state of liberty: but endeavouring to shew that the grounds of our Religion are not repugnant to natural reason, I shall rather make use of the Testimony of such who professed to be followers of nothing else but reason and Philosophy. Among whom I shall make choice of *Simplicius* both for the reason he produceth, and because he is farthest from any suspicion of partiality, by reason of his known opposition to the *Mosaick History* of the Creation. He then in his Commentaries on *Epictetus* professedly disputes this very subject of the Origin of evil, and after having rejected that fond opinion of two principles, one of good, and the other of evil, undertakes to give an account whence evil came into the world, which because it tends so much to the illustrating our present subject, I shall give an account of. God, saith he, who is the fountain and principle of all good, not only produced things which were in themselves good, nor only those things which were of a middle nature, but the extreams too, which were such things which were apt to be perverted from that which is according to nature, to that which we call evil. And that after those bodies which were (as he supposeth) incorruptible, others were produced which are subject to mutation and corruption; and so after those souls which were immutably fixed in good, others were produced which were liable to be perverted from it; that so the riches of God's goodness might be displayed in making to exist all beings which are capable of it; and that the Universe might be perfect in having all sorts of Beings in it. Now, he supposeth, that all those Beings which are above this sublunary world are such as are immutably good, and that the lowest sort of Beings which are liable to be perverted to evil, are such which are here below. Therefore, saith he, the soul being of a more noble and immutable nature, while it is by its self, doth not partake of evil; but it being of a nature apt to be joyned with these terrestrial bodies (by the providence of the author of the Universe, who produced such souls, that so both extreams might be joyned by the bonds of vital union) thereby it becomes sensible of those evils and pains which the body is subject to; but these things are not properly evils but rather good, considering our terrestrial bodies as parts of the Universe which is upheld by the changes and vicissitudes.

*Com. in Epict.  
cap. 34. p. 175.*



cistitudes which are in this lower world: Which he largely discourses on to shew that those particular alterations which are in bodies, do conduce rather to the perfection and beauty of the Universe, than are any real evils in it. But now, saith he, for the origin of those things which are properly evils, viz. moral evils, which are τὰ τῇ ἀνθρώπινῃ ψυχῇ παίσματα, the lapses and errors of the humane soul, we are to consider, that there are souls of a more excellent nature than ours are, which are immutably good; and the souls of brutes are of a lower kind than ours are, and yet are middle between the rational and vegetative, having something in them parallel both to the appetites and evils which are in men, which will therefore be understood by an account of the other. Ἡ δὲ ἀνθρώπινη ψυχή, μέση περιελθούσα ἢ τε ἀπὸ ἀνω μενεσῶν ψυχῶν, διὰ τε τὴν ἐν τῇ ψυχικῇ ὁσίᾳ ἀνερέτητα, καὶ διὰ τὴν τῷ νῷ μέθεξιν, καὶ ἢ ἀπὸ ἡτάτω διὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸ σῶμα συγγένειαν τῷ ἀλόγῳ ζῳῆς, καὶ σύνδεσμον ζωπικὸς γινόμενη ἢ τε ἀνω καὶ ἢ ἡτάτω, διὰ τὴν αὐτεξουσίαν χάριτος, ποτὲ μὲν πρὸς ἐκείνα, ποτὲ δὲ πρὸς ταῦτα ὁμοῖται. The soul of man is nexus utriusq; mundi, in the middle between those more excellent Beings which perpetually remain above, with which it partakes in the sublimity of its nature and understanding, and those inferior terrestrial Beings with which it communicates through the vital union which it hath with the body, and by reason of that freedom and indifferency which it hath, it sometimes is assimilated to the one, sometimes to the other of these extremes. So that while it approacheth to the nature of the superior Beings, it keeps it self free from evil, but because of its freedom it may sometimes sink down into these lower things, and so he calls the cause of all evil in the soul τὴν αὐτοθελὴν καὶ ὁδοὺν εἰς τόνδε θνητὸν τόπον, its voluntary descent into this lower world, and immersing it self in the feculency of terrestrial matter. καὶ ἂν φύσιν δὲ ἀμφίβολον ἔλαχεν, ἐκ ἀναγκαζομένην ἡτάτῃσιν ἢ ἀνωσιν, ἀλλ' ἔτιως πάρεστι, ὡς ὅταν αὐτὴ θέλῃ κατιέναι τε καὶ ἀνιέναι. For though the soul be of a kind of Amphibious nature, yet it is not forced either upwards or downwards, but acts either way according to its internal liberty. But, saith he, while the rational soul keeps that power which it hath in its hands over the body, and makes use of it only as an instrument for its own good, so long it keeps pure and free from any stain of evil; but when it once forgets the similitude it hath with the more excellent Being,

Pag. 180. ed.  
Salmasii.

and.

and throws away the Scepter of its power, and drowns it self in the body and brutish affections (preferring the pleasure of sense above that of reason) when it so far degenerates below the principles of reason, that instead of commanding the brutish faculties it becomes a slave to them, then it conceives and brings forth evil; but this it doth not through any co-action or necessity, but through the abuse of that power and liberty which it hath: For the choice is a proper action of the soul it self; which he proves from hence, because God and the Laws, and all good men, do not measure the good and evil of actions so much by the event, as by the will and intention of the person; and that punishment and reward have chiefly a respect to those. And therefore men are pardoned for what they do out of constraint and force, and the fault is ascribed, ὅτις ἀναγκάσθη ἀλλὰ βιάσασθαι, not to him that did it, but to him that forced him to the doing of it. And so from hence he concludes, that because of the freedom of the will of man, nothing else can be said to be the author of evil properly; but the soul of man; and concludes that discourse with this excellent speech, Ἐχούτες ἐν τῷ αἰτίῳ τῆς κακῆς, λαμπρὰ τε φωνὴ βοῶντος, ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς κακίας ἀναιτίος, διότι τὸ κακὸν ἡ ψυχὴ ἐνεργεῖ αὐτεξουσίας, καὶ ἐκ ὁ Θεός· εἰ μὴ γὰρ βίαι τὸ κακὸν ἐπεσπινεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ, τίχα ἂν τις ὁ Θεὸν ἠτιόσατο ὅτι ἀναίτιος αὐτῷ συγχρησάμεντα βιάσθαι, καὶ τοὺς κακὸν ἦν τὸ βίαι πεσπινόμενον κατὰ τὴν περὶ αἰτίας αὐτὸ αἰσχυρὴν αὐτῇ ἀν αἰτία λέγοιτο δίκαιως. Having thus found out the true Origin of evil, let us cry out with a loud voice, that God is not the author of sin, because the soul freely doth that which is evil, and not God; for if the soul were forced to do what it doth, one might justly lay the blame, on God, who permits such a force to be offered it, neither could it be properly evil which the soul was constrained to; but since it acted freely, out of choice, the soul must alone be accounted the author and cause of evil. Thus we see that God cannot with any shadow of reason be accounted the author of evil, because he gave the soul of man a principle of internal freedom, when the very freedom of acting which the soul had, put it into a capacity of standing as well as falling. And certainly, he can never be said to be the cause of the breaking of a person, who gave him a stock to set up with, and supposed him able to manage it when he gave it him; indeed had not man had this freedom of will, he could not have fallen; but then neither had



had he been a *rational Agent*, which supposing no *corruption*, doth speak freedom of *action*. So that while we enquire after the *Origin* of *evil* we have no other *cause* to assign it to but man's *abuse* of that *free* power of acting which he had ; but if we will be so curious as to enquire further, why God did create man with such a *freedom of will*, and not rather fix his soul immutably on *good* ; if the *order of beings* be no satisfactory reason for it, we can give no other than that why he made *man*, or the *world* at all, which was the *good pleasure* of his *Will*.

But secondly, supposing God's giving man this freedom of will, doth not entitle him to be the author of evil ; doth not his leaving man to this liberty of his in the temptation, make him the cause of sin ? I answer no, and that on these accounts.

Sett. 7.

1. Because man stood then upon such terms, that he could not fall but by his own free and voluntary act ; he had a power to stand, in that there was no principle of corruption at all in his faculties, but he had a pure and undefiled soul which could not be polluted without its own consent : Now it had been repugnant to the terms on which man stood (which were the trial of his obedience to his Creator) had he been irresistibly determined any way. Simplicius puts this question after the former discourse, *Whether God may not be called the author of sin, because he permits the soul to use her liberty ?* but, saith he, he that says God should not have permitted this use of its freedom to the soul, must say one of these two things, either that the soul being of such a nature as is indifferent to good or evil, it should have been wholly kept from the choosing evil, or else that it should have been made of such a nature that it should not have had a power of choosing evil. The first is irrational and absurd ; for what freedom and liberty had that been where there was no choice ? and what choice could there have been where the mind was necessitated only to one part ? For the second we are to consider, saith he, that no evil is in it self desirable, or to be chosen ; but withal, if this power of determining it self either way must be taken away, it must be either as something not good, or as some great evil ; and whoever saith so, doth not consider, how many things in the world there are, which are accounted good and desirable things, yet are no ways comparable with this freedom of Will.

For

For it excells all sublunary Beings ; and there is none would rather desire to be a Brute or Plant than man ; if God then shewed his goodness in giving to inferior beings such perfections which are far below this, as it any ways incongruous to God's nature and goodness to give man the freedom of his actions, and a self determining power, though he permitted him the free use of it ? Besides, as that author reasons, had God to prevent man's sin taken away the Liberty of his will, he had likewise destroyed the foundation of all vertue, and the very nature of man ; for vertue would not have been such, had there been no possibility of acting contrary ; and man's nature would have been divine, because impeccable Therefore, saith he, though we attribute this self-determining power to God as the Author of it, which was so necessary in the order of the Universe, we have no reason to attribute the Origin of that evil to God which comes by the abuse of that liberty. For, as he further adds, God doth not at all cause that aversion from Good, which is in the soul when it sins, but only gave such a power to the soul, whereby it might turn it self to evil, out of which God might afterwards produce so much good, which could not otherwise have been without it. So consonantly to the Scripture doth that Philosopher speak on this subject.

pag 186, 187.

2. God cannot be said to be the author of sin, though he did not prevent the fall of man, because he did not withdraw before his fall any grace or assistance, which was necessary for his standing. Had there been indeed a necessity of supernatural grace to be communicated to man for every moment, to continue him in his Innocency, and had God before mans fall withdrawn such assistance from him, without which it were impossible for him to have stood, it would be very difficult freeing God from being the cause of the Fall of man. But we are not put to such difficulties for acquitting God from being the author of sin ; for there appears no necessity at all for asserting any distinction of sufficient and efficacious grace in man before his Fall ; that the one should belong only to a radical power of standing, the other to every act of good which Adam did ; For if God made man upright, he certainly gave him such a power as might be brought into act without the necessity of any supervenient act of grace, to elicit that habitual power into particular actions. If the other were sufficient it



it was *sufficient* for its end ; and how could it be *sufficient* for its end, if notwithstanding that, there were no *possibility* of *standing*, unless *efficacious help* were superadded to it ? God would not certainly require any thing from the *creature* in his *integrity*, but what he had a *power* to *obey* ; and if there were *necessary* further *grace* to bring the *power* into act, then the *subtracting* of this *grace* must be by way of *punishment* to man, which it is hard to conceive for what it should be, before man had sinned, or else God must *subtract* this *grace* on purpose that man might fall, which would necessarily follow on this supposition, in which case man would be *necessitated* to fall, *veluti cum subductis columnis domus necessario corrui*, as one expresseth it, *as a house must needs fall when the pillars on which it stood are taken away from it*. But now if God withdrew not any *effectual grace* from man, whereby he must necessarily fall, then though God permit man to use his liberty, yet he cannot be said to be any ways the *author* of *evil*, because man had still a *posse si vellet*, a power of standing, if he had made right use of his *Liberty*, and God never took from man his *adjutorium quo potuit stare*, & *sine quo non potuit*, as *Divines* call it, man enjoying still his *power*, though by the *abuse* of his *Liberty* he fell into *sin* ; so that granting God to leave man to the use of his *Liberty*, yet we see God cannot in the least be charged with being the *Author* of *sin*, or of the *origin* of *evil*, by the *history* of the *fall* of man in *Scripture* : which was the thing to be cleared.

We come now in the *third* place to compare that account given of the *origin* of *evil* in *Scripture*, with that which was embraced by *Heathen Philosophers*, in point of reason and evidence. There was no one inquiry whatsoever in which those who had nothing but natural light to guide them, were more to seek for satisfaction in, than this concerning the *origin* of *evil*. They saw by continual experience how great a *Torrent* of both sorts of *evils*, of *sin* and *punishment*, did overflow the world ; but they were like the *Egyptians*, who had sufficient evidence of the overflowing their banks by the River *Nile*, but could not find out the *spring* or the head of it. The reason was, as *corruption* increased in the world, so the *means* of *instruction* and *knowledge* decayed ; and so as the *Phænomena* grew greater, the *reason* of them was less understood ;

the knowledge of the History of the first *Ages* of the world, through which they could alone come to the full understanding of the true cause of evil, insensibly decaying in the several Nations: Infomuch that those who are not at all acquainted with that History of the world which was preserved in *Sacred Records* among the *Jews*, had nothing but their own uncertain conjectures to go by, and some kind of obscure traditions which were preserved among them, which while they sought to rectify by their *interpretations*, they made them more *obscure* and *false* than they found them. They were certain of nothing, but that mankind was in a low and degenerate condition, and subject to continual miseries and calamities; they who cried up the most the αὐτεξέλιον, or the *self-determining power* of the *soul*, could not certainly but strangely wonder, that a *Principle* indifferent to be carried either way, should be so almost *fatally* inclined to the worst of them. It was very strange that since *Reason* ought to have the command of *Passions* by their own acknowledgment, the *brutish* part of the soul should so master and enslave the *rational*, and the *beast* should still cast the *rider* in man, the *sensitive appetite* should throw off the power of the τὸ ἡγεμονικόν, of that *faculty* of the soul which was designed for the *Government* of all the rest. The *Philosophers* could not be ignorant what *slaves* they were themselves to this *terrestrial Hyle*, how easily their most *mettlesome souls* were mired in the dirt, how deep they were sunk into corporeal pleasures, that it was past the power of their reason to help them out. Nay, when the soul begins to be fledged again, after her μετεσπύσσας, or *moulting*, at her entrance into the body, which *Plato* speaks of, and strives to raise her self above this lower world, she then feels the weight of such *Plummets* hanging at her feet, that they bring her down again to her former fluttering up and down in her *Cage* of earth. So *Hierocles* complains, that when *reason* begins to carry the soul to the perception of the most noble objects, the soul with a generous flight would soar above this world, ὅταν μὴ ἢ παρὰ τὰς ἰσχυρὰς ὁρμαῖς ὥστερ ποτὶ μέγιστον, ἐκτρέψῃ πρὸς χαλιν, were it not born down to that which is evil by the force of passions, which hang like leads upon the soul's feet. What a strange unaccountable thing must this needs be to those who beheld the constancy of the effect, but were to seek for the cause,

*Hieroc. in aureo carmina.*

¶ 17.



cause of it? It could not but be clear to them that the *αὐτεξέσιον* they were wont to extoll so high, was (in the state man was now in) but a more noble name for slavery; when themselves could not but confess the *πόνη*, or inclination in the soul, was so strong to the evil; and could that be an *even balance*, where there was so much *down weight* in one of the *scales*? unless they made, as some of them did, the *voluntary inclinations* of the soul to *evil*, an evidence of her *liberty* in this most degenerate condition, as though it were any argument that the *prisoner* was the *freer*, because he *delighted* himself in the *noise* of his *shakles*. Neither was this disorder alone at home in the soul, where there was still a *Xanippe* scolding with *Socrates*, *passion* striving with *reason*; but when they looked abroad in the world, they could not but observe some strange irregularities in the *converse* among men. What *debaucheries*, *contentions*, *rapines*, *fightings* and *destroying* each other, and that with the greatest cruelty, and that frequently among *countrymen*, *friends*, *nay relations* and *kindreds*! and could this *hostility* between those of the same nature, and under the most sacred *bonds* of *union*, be the *result* of *nature*, when even *beasts* of *prey* are not such to those of their own *kind*? Besides all this, when they summed up the life of *man* together, and took an account of the *weaknesses* and *follies* of *childhood*, the *hearts* and *extravagancies* of *youth*, the *passions*, *disquietments* and *disappointments* of men in their strength and height of business, the *inquietude*, *aches* and *infirmities* of old age, besides the *miseries* which through every one of these all men are subject to, and few escape, into how small a *sum* will the solid *pleasure* and *contentment* of the *life* of *man* be reduced? Nay, if we take those things in the world which men please themselves the most in enjoyment of, and consider but with what *care* they are *got*, with what *fear* they are *kept*, and with what *certainty* they must be *lost*; and how much the *possession* of any thing fails of the *expectation* of it, and how near men are upon the *top* of *Tenariff* to fall into the *depth* of the *Sea*; how often they are *precipitated* from the height of *prosperity*, into the *depth* of *adversity*, we shall find yet much less that by the greatest *Chymistrie* can be extracted of *real satisfaction* out of these things. Whence then should it come that men's *souls* should so delight to feed on these *barks*, and to embrace

these clouds and shadows, instead of that real good which is the true object of the soul's desire? They could easily see there was no pure, unmixed good in the world, but there was a *contemperation* of both together, according to that of Euripides :

Οὐκ ἂν ἥμοισι χρεῖς ἔδρα καὶ καλὴ,  
' Ἀλλ' ἔστι τις σύγκρησις.

There is a kind of continual mixture of good and evil in the world, which Socrates observed upon the rubbing of his thigh *Plat. in Phaed.* where the fetters made it itch, ὡς ἄπορον ὦ ἄνδρες, ἔοικέ τι τῷ τῷ καλῷσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἡδύ; ὡς θανάσιος πέφυκε πρὸς τὸ δοκῶν ἐναλίων ἔν, τὸ λυπηρὲν; What a strange thing is that which men are wont to call pleasure? how near of kin is it to that which seems so contrary to it, pain?

Sett. 9.

Now the observing the strange and sudden vicissitudes of these things, and what near neighbours pain and pleasure were to each other, (so that there is frequently a passage out of one into the other) did yet more *entangle* them to give a clear account of the *origin* of both these. Those who believe there was a God, who produced the world and ordered all things in it, did easily attribute whatever was good in the world to the *Fountain* of all goodness; but that any evil should come from him they thought it *repugnant* to the very notion of a Deity; which they were so far right in, as it concerned the evil of sin; which we have already shewed God could not be the author of; but therein they shewed their ignorance of the true cause of evil, that they did not look upon the miseries of life as effects of God's Justice upon the world for the evil of sin. And therefore that they might set the origin of evil far enough off from God, they made two different Principles of things, the one of good, and the other of evil; this Plutarch tells us was the most ancient and universal account which he could meet with of the origin of good and evil. To which purpose we have this ample Testimony of his in his learned discourse, *de Iside & Osiride*, διὸ καὶ παντάλαιοι αὐτῇ κατέτισιν ἐκ θεολόγων καὶ νομοθετῶν, εἰς τε ποιητὰς καὶ φιλοσόφους δόξα, τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀνίστοσιν ἔχουσα, τὴν ὅσιν ἰσχυρὰ καὶ δυσεξάλειπτον, ἐκ ἐν λόγοις μόνον, ἐδὲ ἐν φήμαις, ἀλλὰ ἐν τε τελείαις ἐν τε δυσταῖς, καὶ βαρβαρίαις καὶ Ἑλλανοῖς πολλαχῶς περιεργασίω, ὡς ἔτ' ἄνεν καὶ ἀλογον καὶ ἀκυβέρνητον αἰσρεῖται τῷ αὐτομάτῳ τὸ πᾶν, ὅτε εἰς ὅσιν ὁ κερταὶν καὶ κατεν-  
δύων,

Plutarch. de  
Iside & Osir.  
p. 369. ed. Fr.



δυνῶν, ὥσπερ οἶαζιν ἥτισι πειθινοῖς καλινοῖς λόγῳ; ἀλλὰ πολλὰ καὶ μαμυμῶα κακοῖς καὶ ἀγαθοῖς· μᾶλλον ὅμως ἐν ὧς ἀπλῶς εἰπεῖν, ἀκραι-  
τον ἐλαῦδα τὸ φύσεως φερέσης· ὃ δυνεῖν πῶδων εἰς ταμίαις, ὥσπερ νάμα-  
τι τὰ παράγμια καπηλικῶς διανήμων ἀνακεράνυσιν ἡμῖν, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ  
δυνεῖν ἐναντίων ἀρχῶν, καὶ δυνεῖν ἀντισταλῶν δυνάμεων, τὸ μὲν ὅτι τὰ  
δεξιὰ καὶ καλ' εὐθείαν ἀκρημίνης, τὸ ὅτι ἐμπαλιν ἀναστροφῆς καὶ  
ἀνακλῶσης, ὃ τε βίῳ μικρὸς, ὃ τε κόσμῳ εἰ καὶ μὴ πᾶς, ἀλλ' ὃ πε-  
ρίγει· ἔτ' καὶ μὲν σελῶν, ἀνόμελ' καὶ ποικίλ' ἄρνε, καὶ με-  
ταβολὰς πᾶσας δεικνύει· εἰ γὰρ ἐδὲν ἀνασίως πέφυκε γίνεσθαι, αἰ-  
τῆσαν ὅτι κακὸν τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐκ αὐτοῦ γὰρ ἀφ' ὧν, δεῖ γένεσιν ἰδίαν καὶ ἀρχῶν,  
ὥσπερ ἀγαθὸν καὶ κακὸν, τὼ φύσιν ἔχουσιν. Which words I have  
the more largely cited, because they give us the most full ac-  
count of the antiquity, universality and reason of that opini-  
on which asserts two different principles of good and evil. *It is a tradition (saith he) of great antiquity derived down from the ancient Masters of Divine knowledge, and Formers of Common-wealths, to the Poets and Philosophers, whose first Author cannot be found, and yet hath met with firm and unshaken belief, not only in ordinary discourses and reports, but was spread into the mysteries and sacrifices both of Greeks and others, that the Universe did not depend on chance, and was destitute of mind and reason to govern it; neither was there one only reason which sat at the stern, or held the reins, whereby he did order and govern the world; but since there is so much confusion and mixture of good and evil in the world, that nature doth not produce any pure untainted good; there is not any one who like a Drawer takes the liquor out of two several vessels, and mixeth them together, and after distributes them; but there are two principles and powers contrary to each other, whereof one draws us to the right hand, and directs us straight forward, the other pulls us back, and turns us the other way; since we see the life of man so mixed as it is; and not only that, but the world too, at least so much as is sublunary and terrestrial, which is subject to many varieties, irregularities and changes. For if nothing be without a cause, and good cannot be the cause of evil, it necessarily follows, that as there is a peculiar nature and principle which is the cause of good, so there must be another, which is the cause of evil.*

But lest we should think it was only a *Sect* of a kind of *Heathen Manichees* which held this opinion; he tells us, to prevent

prevent that καὶ δοκεῖ τῷ τοῖς πλείστοις καὶ σοφώτατις, it was the opinion of the most, and wisest, of the Heathen. Now these two principles some (saith he) call two opposite Gods, whereof the one is the cause of good, and the other of evil; him they call Θεός, this Δαίμων. By this one would imagine that this very ancient Tradition was nothing else but the true account of the origin of evil a little disguised. For the Scripture making the Devil the first Author of evil himself, and the first solicitor and tempter of man to it; who when God directed him straight forward, pull'd man back, and put him quite out of his way, by which means all the miseries of the world came into it: For while man kept close to his Maker, his integrity and obedience were to him what the vasa umbilicalia are to the child in the Womb; by them he received whatever tended to his subsistence and comfort: but sin cut those vessels asunder, and proved the Midwife of misery, bringing man forth into a world of sorrow and sufferings: Now, I say, the Scripture taking such especial notice of one, as the chief of Devils, through whose means evil came into the world, this gave occasion to the Heathens, when length of time had made the original Tradition more obscure, to make these two, God and the Dæmon, as two Anti-gods, and so to be the causes, the one of all good, and the other of all evil. Which at last came to that (which was the Devil's great design in thus corrupting the tradition) that both these Anti-gods should have solemn worship by Sacrifices; the one by way of impetration, for bestowing of good; the other by way of deprecation, for averting of evil. Such Plutarch there tells us were the Oromasdes and Arimanius of Zoroastres which were worshipped by the Persians, the one for doing good, and the other for avoiding evil; the one they resembled to light (or fire) the other to darkness and ignorance; what Animals were good and usefull they ascribed to Oromasdes, and all venomous and noxious ones to Arimanius, whom Plutarch elsewhere calls ὁ πονηρὸν Δαίμονα Περσῶν, the evil Dæmon of the Persians. The same Diogenes Laertius relates of the Magi, the Philosophers of Persia, that they made two distinct principles, Ἀγαθὸν Δαίμονα καὶ κακὸν, a good and bad Dæmon; for which he quotes Dion, Aristotle, Hermippus, Eudoxus, and others. The same Plutarch makes to be the opinion of the ancient Greeks, who attri-

Plut. in Alex.  
Diog. Laertius  
proem. ad vit.  
Philosoph.



attribute the good to *Jupiter Olympus*, the bad to *Hades*; the *Chaldeans*, saith he, make the *Planets* their Gods, of which two they suppose the cause of good; two more of only a malignant influence, and other three to be indifferent to either. The same he affirms of the *Egyptians*, that whatever was evil and irregular, they ascribed to *Typho*; what was good, comely and usefull, they attributed to *Isis* and *Osiris*; to *Isis* as the passive, *Osiris* as the active principle.

Thus we see how large a spread this opinion of the origin of evil had in the *Gentile* world; neither did it expire with *Heathenism*; but *Manes* retained so much of the Religion of his Countrey, being a *Persian*, that he made a strange medley of the *Persian* and *Christian* doctrine together. For that was his famous opinion, of which *St. Austin* tells us; *Iste duo principia inter se diversa atque adversa, eademque eterna, & co-eterna, hoc est, semper fuisse, composuit; duasque naturas atque substantias, boni, scilicet, & mali, sequens alios antiquos hæreticos, opinatus est.* *St. Austin* thinks that *Manes* had his opinion concerning two principles from the ancient *Hereticks*, by whom I suppose he means the *Marcionists* and *Valentinians*; but it seems more probable that *Manes* had his doctrine immediately from his Countreymen, though it be generally thought that *Scythianus* and *Buddas* were his Masters in it. But from whomsoever it came, the opinion was merely *Heathen*, and not more contrary to *Scripture* than it is to *Reason*; the former I meddle not with, that opinion being now extinct in the *Christian* world; I only briefly consider the unreasonableness of it; to shew what a far better account of the origin of evil the *Scriptures* give us, than was discovered by the *Heathen Philosophers*. For on both sides that opinion is repugnant to the notion of a Deity, so that while they would make two such Gods, they make none at all. For how can the principle of good be God, if he hath not *Infinite power*, as well as *goodness*? and how can he have *Infinite power*, if he hath not the management of things in the world? and how can he have the management of things, if they be liable to evil, which the other god, which is the principle of evil, may lay upon it; from which, according to this supposition, the principle of good cannot rescue it? So that they who hold this opinion

Sect 10.

*August. de Hæres. c. 46.*

nion cannot, as *Simplicius* tells us, give God τὸ ἡμισυ τῆς ἰσχύος, the half of that infinite power which belongs to him ; for neither can he keep the good creatures which he makes from the power of the evil *Dæmon*, and therefore if he loves them, must be in continual fears of the power of the contrary principle ; neither can he free them from the evil which the other lays upon them ; for then God's power would be far greater than the evil *Dæmons*, and so he could be no *Anti-God*. And on the other side the notion or *Idea* of an *Infinite evil Being*, is in its self an inconsistent *Idea* ; for it is an *Infinite non-entity*, if we suppose his very *Being* to lie in *Being evil*, which is only a privation of goodness ; and besides if he be *Infinitely evil*, he must be *infinitely contrary* to the good Principle ; and how can he be *infinitely contrary* which enjoys several of the same perfections, which the other hath, which are infinity of essence and necessity of existence ? Now if this Principle of evil be absolutely contrary to the other, it must be contrary in all his perfections ; for whatever is a perfection, belongs to that which is good ; and now if it be contrary in every perfection, *Infinity of essence*, and *Necessity of existence*, being two, it must be as contrary as is imaginable to them, by which this evil Principle must be infinitely defective in being and existence, and so it will be an *infinite non-entity* which yet exists, which is the height of contradiction. Again, if there be such a contrary principle, which is the cause of all evil, then all evil falls out unavoidably, and by the power of this infinitely evil principle, by which means not only all Religion, but all virtue and goodness will be taken out of the world, if this evil principle be infinite ; and if not infinite, no *Anti-god* : and not only so, but all difference of good and evil will be taken away (and then what need making two such contrary principles to give an account of the origin of evil ?) for when once evil becomes thus necessary, it loseth its nature as a moral evil ; for a moral evil implies in it a voluntary breach of some known Law ; but how can that breach be voluntary, which was caused by an *Infinite power* in the most proper way of efficiency ? And thus if all freedom of will be destroyed (as it is necessarily by this supposition) then no Government of the world by Laws can be supposed, and consequently no reward or  
punish-



*punishment*, which suppose *liberty* of action, and by this means all *Religion*, *Laws*, and *Providence* are banished out of the world, and so this evil *Dæmon* will get all into his own hands, and instead of two contrary principles, there will be but one *infinitely evil Dæmon*. Which that there is not, appears by this, that notwithstanding all the *evil* in the world, there is so much *good* left in it, of which there would be none, if this evil *Dæmon* had *Infinite power*. By this we see there cannot be a principle infinitely evil ; for while they go about to make two such *contrary principles* infinite, they make *neither* of them so, and so while they make two *Gods*, they take away any at all. So that this opinion of the *Origin of evil*, is manifestly *absurd*, *irrational*, and *contradictious*.

But all the *Heathen Philosophers* were not so *gross* as to imagine two such *Anti-gods* with infinitely active power ; but yet *those* who would not in terms assert it, might be driven to it by the *consequence* of their opinion concerning the *Origin of evil*, which did suppose a *necessity* of it in nature, as flowing from that *passive principle* out of which the world was produced. Hence it was that *Heraclius* as *Plutarch* tells us, attributed the *Origin of all things* to *discord* and *antipathy*, and was wont to say, that when *Homer* wished

*Sect. II.*

*De Isid. & Os-  
ride.*

ἐν τῇ θεῶν ἔειν ἐκ τὰνθρώπων ἀπολέσθαι.

that all contention were banished out of the world, that he did secretly *curse* the *Origin* of things, and wished the *ruin* of the world. So *Empedocles* called the active principle which did good *Harmony* and *Friendship*, but the other

Νεῖκε ἐλόμενον καὶ δῆειν αἱματέσαν.

by which he makes it to be a *quarrelsome*, *pernicious*, and *bloody principle*. The same *Plutarch* tells us of those two renowned *Philosophers*, *Pythagoras* and *Plato*. Thence he tells us the *Pythagoreans* called the principle of good, τὸ ἐν, περὶ αὐτὸ μένον, τὸ μένον, τὸ εὐδὸν, τὸ περιωπὸν, τὸ τετραγώνον, τὸ δεξιὸν, τὸ λαμπρὸν. *Unity*, *finite*, *quiescent*, *straight*, *uneven number*, *square*, *right* and *splendid* ; the principle of evil, they called τὸ δυνάει, τὸ ἀπειρὸν, τὸ φερόμενον, τὸ χαμπύλον, τὸ ἄσπον, τὸ ἐτερόμ-

καί, τὸ ἀνίστον, τὸ ἀεικινεῖν, τὸ σκολιὸν. *The Binary, Infinite, moving, crooked, even, long of one side, unequal, left, obscure.* The opinion of Plato he tells us is very obscure, it being his purpose to conceal it; but he saith in his old age in his book *de Legibus*, ἡ δὲ ἀνιχνυῶν, ἡ δὲ συμβολικῶς, *without any if's or and's*, he asserts the world to be moved by more than one principle, by two at the least, τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγαθὴν ἢ, τὴν ἑναντίαν ταύτῃ, καὶ ἡ ἐναντίαν ἡμικίνητον. *The one of a good and benign nature, the other contrary to it both in its nature and operations.* Numenius in Chalcidius thus delivers the opinions of Pythagoras and Plato *de originibus* as he speaks; *Igitur Pythagoras quoque, inquit Numenius, fluidam & sine qualitate sylvam esse censet; nec tamen ut Stoici naturæ mediæ, interque malorum bonorumque viciniam, sed plane noxiam; Deum quippe esse (ut etiam Platoni videtur) initium & causam bonorum, sylvam malorum: so that according to Numenius, both Plato and Pythagoras attributed the origin of evil to the malignity of matter, and so they make evils to be necessarily consequent upon the Being of things.* For thus he delivers expressly the opinion of Pythagoras; *qui ait, existente providentia, mala quoque necessario substituisse, propterea quod sylva sit, & eadem sit malitia prædita: Platonemque idem Numenius laudat, quod duas mundi animas autumet. Unam beneficentissimam; malignam alteram, sc. Sylvam. Igitur juxta Platonem mundo bona sua Dei, tanquam Patris liberalitate collata sunt; mala vero, matris sylvæ vitio cohaeserunt.* But Plutarch will by no means admit, that Plato attributes the Origin of evil merely to matter, but he makes the principle of evil to be something distinct from matter, which he calls τὴν ἀτακτον, καὶ ἀβεβητον, αὐτοκίνητον ἢ καὶ κινητικὴν ἀρχὴν, *a confused infinite, self-moving, stirring principle; which (saith he) he elsewhere calls Necessity, and in his de Legibus plainly, ψυχὴν ἀτακτον καὶ κακοποιον, a disorderly and malignant Soul, which cannot be understood of mere matter, when he makes his Hyle ἀμορφον καὶ ἀσχηματιστον καὶ πῶτος ποιότητι καὶ δυνάμει ἀκείας ἔχουσαν, Without form or figure, and destitute of all qualities and power of operation: and it is impossible (saith he) that that which is of it self such an inert principle as matter is, should by Plato be supposed to be the cause and principle of evil, which he elsewhere calls ἀνάγκη πολλὰ τῷ θεῷ δυσμαχεῖσαν καὶ ἀφωιδίχουσαν,*

*Necessity*

*Chalcid. in Timæ. p. 394.*

*De Anima procreat. c. Timæ.*



*Necessity which often resisted God and cast off his reins. So that according to Plutarch, Plato acquits both God and Hyle from being the Origin of evil, τὴν γὰρ ἑλὴν διαφρεῖς ἀπίστος ἀπαλλοτρίων, καὶ οὐ θεὸς τὴν αἴτιαν ἐκκλῶν ἀπὸ πάντων πηδῶν,* and therefore attributes it to that *malignant spirit* which moves the *matter*, and is the cause of all the *disorderly motions* in the World. But what this *spirit* should be, neither he nor any one else could ever understand; what *darkness* and *ignorance* then was there among the *wisest* of *Philosophers* concerning the *Origin of evil*, when they were so confus'd and obscure in the account which they gave of it, that their greatest *admirers* could not understand them!

But though *Plato* seem'd so ambiguous in his judgment of the *Origin of evil*, whether he should attribute it to the *Hyle*, or some *malignant spirit* in it, the *Stoicks* were more dogmatical, and plainly imputed the cause of *evil* to the *perversity* of *matter*. So *Chalcidius* tells us, that the *Stoicks* made *matter* not to be *evil* in it self as *Pythagoras*, but that it was *indifferent* to either; *perrogati igitur unde mala? perversitatem seminarium malorum causati sunt*: they made the *perversity* of *matter* the *Origin* of *evil*; but as he well observes, *nec expediunt adhuc unde ipsa perversitas, cum juxta ipsos duo sint initia rerum, Deus & sylvā. Deus summum & præcellens bonum; sylvā, ut censent, nec bonum nec malum.* They give no rational account whence this *perversity* of *matter* should arise, when according to the *Stoicks*, there are but two *principles* of things, *God* and *matter*, whereof the one is perfectly *good*, the other neither *good* nor *evil*. But this *perversity* they tell us is something necessarily consequent upon the *Generation* of things. τὰ ὅλα γὰρ ἐστὶ πάθος τὴ τῇ φύσει περὶπνεύμενα, ὥσπερ ἡ τοῦ χαλκοῦ, καὶ ὁ ῥυτίς τοῦ σώματος, these are *affections*, (*viz.* the disorders in the world) which follow the *Generation* of things, as *rust* comes upon *brass*, and *silth* upon the *body*, as the counterfeit *Trismegistus* speaks; so *Maximus Tyrius* saith that *evils* in the world are ἐκ τῆς ἑλὴς, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐκ τῆς τέχνης, not any *works of art*, but the *affections* of *matter*. Non potest artifex mutare materiam, saith *Seneca*, when he is giving an account why *God* suffers *evils* in the world: and elsewhere gives this account why *evils* came into the World, non quia cessat ars, sed quia id in quo exercetur

Sect. 12.

Chalcid. in Tim. p. 395.

Maxim. Tyrius Serm. 25. Seneca de Provid. c. 5.

Prefat. ad natur. quest.

*inobsequens arti est.* So that the *Origin of evil* by this account of it lies wholly upon the *per-versity* of matter, which it seems was incapable of being put into better order by that God who produced the world out of that matter which the *Stoicks* supposed to be *eternal*. And the truth is, the avoiding the attributing the cause of evil to God, seems to have been the great reason, why they rather chose to make it matter necessary and co-existent with God, and this was the only plausible pretence which *Hermogenes* had for following the *Platonists* and *Stoicks* in this opinion, that he might set God far enough off from being the author of sin ; but I cannot see what advantage comes at all by this *Hypothesis*, but it is chargeable with as many difficulties as any other. For, 1. It either destroys God's omnipotency, or else makes him the approver of evil, so that if he be not author, he must be assentator mali, as *Tertullian* speaks against *Hermogenes*, because he suffered evil to be in matter ; for, as he argues, *aut enim potuit emendare sed noluit ; aut voluit quidem, verum non potuit infirmus Deus ; si potuit & noluit, malus & ipse, quia malo favit ; & sic jam habetur ejus licet non instituerit, quia tamen si nolisset illud esse, non esset ; ipse jam fecit esse, quod noluit non esse : quo quid est turpius ? si voluit esse, quod ipse noluit fecisse, adversum semetipsum egit, cum & voluit esse quod noluit fecisse, & noluit fecisse quod voluit esse.* So that little advantage is gained for the clearing the true origin of evil by this opinion ; for either God could have taken away evil out of matter but would not, or else would but could not ; this latter destroys God's Omnipotency, the former his goodness ; for by that means evil is in the world by his consent and approbation ; for if God would not remove it when he might, the Being of it will come from him ; when if he would have hindered it, it would not have been, and so God by not rooting out of evil, will be found an assentor of it ; male si per voluntatem ; turpiter si per necessitatem, aut famulus erit mali Deus, aut amicus ; if God's will were the cause why sin was, it reflects on his goodness, if God's power could not hinder it, it destroys his omnipotency. So that by this opinion God must either be a slave or a friend to evil. 2. This principle overturns the foundations of Religion, and all transactions between God and mens souls in order to their welfare, because it makes evil

1.

*Tertul. adv.  
Hermog. c. 10.*

2.



evil to be necessarily *existent* in the World; which appears from hence, in that *evil* doth result from the *Being* of *matter*, and so it must necessarily be, as *matter* is supposed to be; for whatever results from the *Being* of a thing, must be *co-existent* with it; and so what flows from what doth necessarily exist, must have the same *Mode of existence* which the *Being* it self hath; as is evident in all the *attributes* of *God*, which have the same *immutability* with his *nature*: now then, if *evil* did exist from *eternity* together with *matter*, it must necessarily exist as *matter* doth, and so evil will be *invincible* and *unavoidable* in the World; which if once granted, renders *Religion* *useless*, makes *God's Commands* *unrighteous*, and *destroys* the *foundation* of *God's proceedings* in the day of *Judgment*. 3. *This opinion makes God not to be the author of good*, while it denies him to be the *Author of evil*. For either there was nothing else but *evil* in this *eternal matter*, or there was a *mixture* of *good* and *evil*; if nothing else but *evil* which did necessarily exist, it were as *impossible* for *God* to produce *good* out of it, as to *annihilate* the necessarily existent *matter*. If there were a *mixture* of *good* and *evil*, they were both there either *necessarily* or *contingently*; how could either of them be *contingently* in that which is supposed to be *necessarily existent*, and *no free agent*? If they be both there necessarily, 1. It is hard conceiving how two such contrary things as *good* and *evil*, should both necessarily be in the same *uniform matter*. 2. Then *God* is no more the *Author of Good* than of *Evil* in the World; for he is said not to be the *Author of evil* because it comes from *matter*; and so it appears *good* doth too, and so *God* according to this *opinion*, is no more the *Author of good*, than he is of *evil*. But if it be said that *good* is not in *matter*, but *God* produced that out of *nothing*: Then I reply, 1. If *God* did produce *good* out of *nothing*, why did he not produce *matter* out of *nothing* too? if he were so powerful as to do the one, there could be no defect of power as to the other. What insufficiency is there in *God's* nature for producing all things out of *nothing*, if he can produce any thing out of *nothing*? 2. If *God* did produce *good* out of *evil*, why could he not have removed all *evil* out of *matter*? for *good* could not be produced, but by the removing of some *evil* which was before that *good*, and so *God* might have removed all *evil* out of *matter*.

And

And so by not doing it when he might, this opinion gives not the least satisfaction in point of reason for acquitting God from being the Author of *sin*, nor for clearing the true *Origin* of *evil*.

Sett. 13.

Thus we have now compared the account given of it in *Scripture*, with that given by the *Heathen Philosophers*, and find it in every thing more *clear*, *rational* and *satisfactory* than theirs is. Which doubtless is the reason, why the more modern *Philosophers*, such as *Hierocles*, *Porphyrus*, *Simplicius* and others, though otherwise great opposers of *Christianity*, did yet in this *side* with the *Scriptures* and attribute the *original* of *evil* not to *matter* but to the *Will* of *man*. And whoever is seriously conversant with the *writings* of those *Philosophers*, who were *en r'égés* *Assés* of the *sacred succession*, out of the *School* of *Ammonius* at *Alexandria*, such as *Plotinus*, *Porphyrus*, *Jamblichus* and *Hierocles*, will find them write in a higher strain concerning many *weighty* and *important* truths, as of the *degeneracy* of *mens souls* from *God*, and the *way* of the *souls* returning to him, than the most *sublime* of the ancient *Philosophers* had done. Which *speculations* of theirs no doubt arose not so much from the *School* of *Plato*, and *Pythagoras*, as of that great restorer of *Philosophy* *Ammonius* of *Alexandria*; whose *Scholars* *Herennius*, *Origen* and *Plotinus* were. Who living and dying a *Christian*, as *Eusebius* and *Hierom* assure us, whatever *Porphyrus* suggests to the contrary, did communicate to his *Scholars* the *sublimer Mysteries* of *Divine Revelation*, together with the *speculations* of the ancient *Philosophers*: which *Holstenius* conceives he did with an *adjuration* of *secrecy*, which he tells us *Porphyrus* himself acknowledgeth, that those three *Scholars* of *Ammonius*, *Herennius*, *Origen* and *Plotinus*, were under an *obligation* to each other not to reveal and discover, though it were after *violated* by them. It is an easie matter to conceive what an *excellent improvement* might be made of the ancient *Platonick Philosophy* by the advantage of the *Scriptures*, by one who was so well versed in both of them as *Ammonius* is supposed to have been; and how agreeable and becoming would that *Philosophy* seem which had only its *rise* from *Plato*, but its *height* and *improvement* from those rich and truly *divine Truths* which were *inlaid* with them? The want of observing this, *viz.* whence it was that those *excellent discourses* in the latter *Platonists* had

Euseb. Eccles.  
hist l. 6. c. 19.  
Hierony. de  
Scrip. Eccl. De  
vit. & Script.  
Porphyr. c. 6.



had their true *original*, hath given occasion to several mistakes among learned men : as first the over-valuing of the *Platonick Philosophy*, as though in many of the *discourses* and *notions* of it, it seemed to some (who were more in love with Philosophy than the Scriptures) to out-goe what is *discovered* therein concerning the same *things*. *A most groundless and unworthy censure* ! when it is more than *probable* (and might be largely manifested, were it here a fit opportunity) that whatever is truly *generous* and *noble* in the *sublimest discourses* of the *Platonists*, had not only its primitive rise, but its *accession* and *improvement* from the *Scriptures* wherein it is still contained in its native *lustre* and *beauty*, without those *painings* and impure *mixtures* which the *sublimest truths* are corrupted with in the *Platonick Writings*. The reason of which is, though these *Philosophers* grew suddenly rich through the spoils they had taken out of the *Scriptures*, yet they were loth to be known, from whence they had them, and would seem to have had that out of their own gardens which was only transplanted from the *Sacred writings*. Therefore we find them not mentioning the *Scriptures* and the *Christian doctrine* without some contempt of its *meanness* and simplicity ; and whatever improvement they had gained by them, they would have it less taken notice of by professing their *opposition* to the *Christians*, as is notorious in those great *Philosophers*, *Porphyrus*, *Jamblichus*, *Hierocles*, *Simplicius* and others. It being their design to take so much and no more out of the *Christian Doctrine* as they could well suit with their *Platonick notions*, by which means they so disguised the *faces* of the *Truths* they stole, that it were hard for the right *owners* of them to know them again. Which was the *grand artifice* of their great Master *Plato*, who doubtless by means of his abode and acquaintance in *Egypt* about the time when the *Jews* began to flock thither, had more certain knowledge of many *truths* of grand importance, concerning the *Deity*, the *Nature* of the *soul*, the *Origin* of the *world*, than many other *Greek Philosophers* had ; but yet therein lay his great fault, that he wrapt up and disguised his notions in such a *fabulous* and ambiguous manner, that partly it might be less known from whence he had them, and that they might find better entertainment among the *Greeks*, than they were ever like to do in their plain

Plato in Epi-  
nom.

plain and native dress. Which *Plato* himself seems somewhere to intimate, when he saith, that what the *Greeks* received from the *Barbarians*, *καλλεν τὸ εἰς τὴν ἀπεργάζονται*, they put it into a better fashion, i. e. they disguise it, alter and change it as they please, and put it into a Greek habit, that it might never be suspected to have been a Foreigner. Thence *Tertullian* speaks with a great deal of truth and freedom of such Philosophers who did *ingenii sitim de prophetarum fonte irrigare* as he expresseth it) that quenched their thirst after knowledge with the Waters of *Jordan* (though they did not like *Naaman*, cure the leprose of the head by washing in them) for as *Tertullian* saith, they came only *ex negotio curiositatis*, more to please the itch of their curiosity than to cure it.

Apol. c. 47.

Tertul. de Ani-  
ma, cap. 2.

And wherein they seemed most to agree with the Scriptures, their difference was beyond their agreement. *Siquidem vera quaeque & consonantia Prophetis aut aliunde commendant aut aliorum subornant, cum maxima injuria veritatis quam efficiunt aut adjuvari falsis aut patrocinari.* Whatever the Philosophers speak agreeable to the Scriptures, either they do not own whence they had it, or turn it quite another way, whereby they have done the truth a great deal of injury, by mixing it with their corruptions of it, and making that little truth a plea for the rest of their errors. Neither was this only among the ancient Philosophers, but the Primitive Christians began to discern the under-hand workings of such, who sought to blend Philosophy and Christianity together; for *Tertullian* himself takes great notice of such, who did *Veritatis dogmata ad Philosophicas sententias adulterare*, suborn Christianity to maintain Philosophy; which makes him cry out, *Viderint qui Stoicum, & Platonium, & Dialecticum Christianismum protulerunt*; by which we see what tampering there was betimes rather to bring Christianity down to Philosophy, than to make Philosophy truckle under the truth and simplicity of the Scriptures. Whether *Ammenius* himself, and some others of the School of *Alexandria*, might be guilty in this kind, is not here a place to enquire, though it be too evident in the Writings of some, that they rather seek to accommodate the Scriptures to the Sentiments of the School of *Plato*, than to reform that by the Scriptures; but I say, however it were with those who were Christians, yet those who were not, but only Philosophers, made

De Proscrip.  
advers. haeret.  
cap. 7.



made their great *advantage* by it. For when they found what was *reconcilable* with the *Doctrine* of *Plato* in the *Scriptures*, done already to their hands, by the *endeavours* chiefly of *Ammonius* and *Origen*, they greedily embrace those improvements of their *Philosophy*, which would tend so much to the *credit* of it, and as contemptuously reject what they found *irreconcilable* with the *dictates* of their *Philosophy*. Now what an *unreasonable* thing is it, when whatever was noble and excellent in the *Heathen Philosophy* was derivative from the *Scriptures*, as the sacred *Fountain* of it, that the meeting with such things should in the least redound to the *prejudice* of the *Scriptures* from whence it was originally derived? when on the other side it should be a great *confirmation* to our *faith*, as to the *Scriptures*, that they who were professed *Philosophers* and *Admirers* only of *reason*, did so readily embrace some of those grand *Truths* which are contained in the *Word* of *God*.

For which we need no other *instance*, than that before us, concerning the *origin* of *evil*, the making out of which will tend to the clearing the *last thing* mentioned concerning it, which was, That *the most material things in it are attested by the Heathens themselves*. And this *honey* which is gained out of the *Lion's* mouth, must needs *taste* sweeter than any other doth. For it is a weak and groundless *mistake* on the other side, which is the *second* (which ariseth from meeting things consonant to the *Scriptures* in the *Writings* of *Philosophers*) presently to conclude from such things, that they were *Christians* (as it is said some have lately done in the behalf of *Hierocles*.) For there being such clear accounts given in *Scripture* of the grand *difficulties* and *perplexities* which the minds of men were troubled with, when these came to the knowledge of such who were of *Philosophick* and *Inquisitive* heads, we cannot but think they would meet with *acceptation* among them, especially if they might be made consistent with their former *speculations*. Thus it was in our present case concerning the *origin* of *evil*, we have already beheld the lamentable *perplexities* the ancient *Philosophers* were in about it, what *Mæanders* they were lost in for want of a *clue* to guide them through them; now it pleased *God*, after the coming of *Christ* in the *flesh*, to declare to the world the only way for the reco-

Sect. 14.

very of *souls*, and their *eternal salvation*, the *news* of which being spread so far that it soon got among the *Philosophers*, could not but make them more *inquisitive* concerning the *state* and *condition* of their souls, and when they had searched what the *Philosophers* had formerly discovered of it, their *curiosity* would presently prompt them to see what account of things concerning the *souls* of *men* was delivered by the Preachers of this *New doctrine*. By this they could not but presently understand that they declared all men's souls to be in a most degenerate and low *condition*, by being so continually under the power of the most unreasonable and unruly passions, that they were estranged from *God*, and prone to fix on things very unsuitable to their nature, as to all which, their own inward sense and experience could not but tell them that these things were notoriously true; and therefore they enquire further how these things came to be so; which they receive a full *account* of in Scripture, that man's *soul* was at first created *pure* and *holy*, and in perfect *friendship* with *God*, that *God* dealt bountifully and favourably with man; only expected obedience to his *Laws*; that man being a *free agent*, did abuse his *liberty*, and *disobeyed* his *Maker*; and thence came the true *Ἀποπέρας*, the *feathers* of the *soul*, whereby it soared up to *Heaven*, *moulted* away, and the *soul* sunk below its self into a *degenerate* and *apostate condition*, out of which it is impossible to be recovered without some extraordinary expression of *Divine Favour*. Now what is there in all this account, but what is hugely suitable to *principles* of *reason*, and to the general *experience* of the *world*, as to those things which were capable of being tried by it? And those *Philosophers* who were any thing *ingenuous*, and *Lovers* of *truth*, could not but confess the *truth* of those things which we are now speaking of, *viz.* That men's souls are in a very *degenerate condition*. That the most rational account of it is, That man by the act of his own will brought himself into it; and that in order to the happiness of men's souls, there was a necessity of recovery out of this condition.

Sect. 15.

I.

As to the degeneracy of the souls of men; This was the common complaint of those *Philosophers*, who minded the government of themselves, and the practice of virtue, especially of the *Platonists* and *Stoicks*. *Seneca* in all his moral Discourses, especially in his *Epistles*, may speak sufficiently in behalf of the



the *Stoicks*, how much they lamented the degeneracy of the world. And the *Platonists* all complain of the *slavery* of the soul in the body, and that it is here by way of *punishment*, for something which was done before; and which makes me somewhat inclinable to think, that *Plato* knew more of the *lapse of mankind*, than he would openly discover; and for that end disguised it after his usual manner in that *hypothesis* of *præ-existence*, which taking it *Cabbalistically* (for I rather think the opinion of *præ-existence* is so to be taken, than the *history* of the fall of man) may import only this, *That men's souls might be justly supposed to be created happy, but by reason of the Apostasy of man's soul from God, all Souls come now into their bodies as into a kind of prison, they being enslaved to the brutish part within them, there having been such a true ἡμετέροισι, the soul being now deprived of her chiefest perfections in this her low and degenerate condition.* And it seems far more rational to me to interpret those persons opinions to a *Cabbalistical*, or an *Allegorical* sence, who are known to have writ designedly in a way *obscure and ambiguous*, than to force those men's expressions to *Cabbala's*, who profess to write a *plain History*, and that with the greatest *simplicity and perspicuity*. But it cannot but seem very strange that an *hypothesis* capable of being reconciled to the plain *literal* sence of the *Scriptures* (delivered by a person who useth great *artifice and cunning* to disguise his opinions, and such a person withall; who (by such persons themselves who make use of this opinion to that end) is supposed to have been very conversant with the writings of *Moses*) should be taken in its *literal* sence, as it really imports *præ-existence* of each particular soul in the *grossest manner*; and this should be made to be a part of the *philosophick Cabbala* of the writings of such a person, who useth not the least *artifice to disguise his sence*, nor gives us any where the least intimation that he left behind him such *plained pictures* in his *history* of the *beginning of the world*, that if you look straight forward, you may see a *literal Cabbala*, on the one side a *philosophical*, and on the other a *moral*. But now if we remove the *Cabbala* from *Moses* to *Plato*, we may find no *incongruity or repugnancy* at all either as to *Plato* his way of writing, or the *consonancy* of the opinion so interpreted to the plain genuine sence of *Moses*, if by *Plato* his opinion of the

*præ-existence and descent of souls, be understood by the former, the happy state of the soul of man in conjunction with God; and by the latter, the low and degenerate condition which the soul is in, after Apostasie from him. Which the latter Platonists are so large and eloquent in expressing. Porphyrie, where he speaks of some things he counsels men to doe, hath these words, But if we cannot doe them, let us at least doe that which was so much lamented of old, Τὸ θεννέωρον πρὸς τοῦ παλαιῶν, which is, ὡς τοῖον ἐκ' ἐείδων, ἔκλε νεικίων ἡρώμεθα, ὅτι τὸ θεῖον καὶ ἀκήρατον, καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν ἀβλαβὲς σῶζεν ἢ δυνάμεθα. Let us at the least join with our Fore-fathers in lamenting this, that we are compounded of such disagreeing and contrary principles, that we are not able to preserve divine, pure and unspotted Innocency. And Hierocles fully expresseth his fence of the degeneracy of mankind, in these words; Οἱ γὰρ πλεῖστοι κακοὶ καὶ τὸ περσπαδείας ἡπτες καὶ φρενολαβεῖς ὑπὸ τὸ εἰς γλῶ νεύσεως ἡρώμενοι, ὡς καὶ τὸτο παρ' ἑαυτοῦ τὸ κακὸν ἔχεν, διὰ τὸ βεληδῶναι φυγεῖν ἀπὸ Θεοῦ, καὶ ἀπομερίσαι αὐτὸς τὸ τέτε ὁμιλίας, ἥς εὐπύχεν ἐν αὐτῇ καδαρὰ διαγρηλεις τὸ γὰρ ἀπὸ Θεοῦ χάρισμα βλάπτουσα τὰς φρένας ἡ πρὸς γλῶ νεύσει δηλοῖ. The most of men in the world are bad, and under the command of their passions, and grown impotent through their propensity to earth; which great evil they have brought upon themselves, by their wilfull Apostasie from God, and withdrawing themselves from that Society with him which they once enjoyed in pure light: which departure of men's souls from God, which is so hurtfull to the minds of men, is evident by their strong inclination to the things of this world. The same Author mentions, with much approbation, that speech of Heraclitus, speaking of those souls which are ἀπῶλοι εἰς κακίαν, which I cannot better render, than undeclinably good, he saith, ὅτι ζῶμεν τὸ ἐκείνων θάνατον, τεθνήκαμεν δὲ τὸ ἐκείνων βίον! We live their death, and die their life: κείτῃσι γὰρ καὶ ἀποπίπτει τὸ εὐδαίμων. ὁ χῶρεος δ' ἀνδρωπ. For man is now fallen down from that blessed region, and as Empedocles the Pythagorean speaks,*

Φυγὰς θεόθεν καὶ ἀλήτης

Νείκη κραινομένη πίσαν.

Which words cannot be better rendred, than in the words the Scripture useth concerning Cain, and he went from the presence

*De Abstinen.  
lib. 3. sect. 27.*

*Hieroc. in Py-  
thag. Carm.  
p. 261.*



presence of the Lord, and was a fugitive in the earth, and under continual perplexities. For the soul of man having left ἡ λευκὴν καὶ ἀληθείαν (it is Hierocles his own expression) the pleasant meadow of truth (a fit description of Paradise τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ καὶ πειρασμοῦ εἰς γῆιν ἐρχεται σῶμα ὁλβίον αἰῶνος ἀμείβεσθαι. *Hierocl. in Pythag. p. 254.* Through the violence of her moulting, or deplumation, she comes into this earthly body, deprived of that blessed life, which she before enjoyed. Which he tells us is very consonant to Plato's sense of the κάθοδος, or descent of souls, that when by reason of their impotency of fixing wholly on God they suffer συντυχάν καὶ πειρασμόν, some great loss, and a deprivation of former perfections, (which I suppose is meant by the πειρασμός, the souls impotency of flying up above this earthly world) then they lapse into these terrestrial and mortal bodies. So Hierocles concludes with this excellent and Divine speech, ὅσπερ ἐν ἡ δέδεν φύγῃ, καὶ ἡ πειρασμός, καὶ ἡ κατὰ συνέχαι· ὅπως ἐν ἡ τῇ δυνάμει παλαιᾶς ἀποβολῇ, καὶ ἡ τῇ ἀρετῇ, οἷον πτερόν τινα ἐκφυγίς πτεροῦ καὶ ἡ κατὰ συνέχαι, εἰς τὴν δεινὴν εὐζωίαν ἡμῶν ἀνάξει. As therefore by apostasy from God, and the moulting of those feathers of our souls, whereby we may be raised up above this world, we have fallen into this place of mortals which is compassed about with evils: So by the casting off carnal affections, and by the growth of virtues like new feathers to the soul, we shall ascend to the place of pure and perfect good, and to the enjoyments of a divine life. So much more becoming Christians do these excellent Philosophers speak of the degeneracy of men's souls, and the consequents of it, than some who would be accounted the followers of reason, as well as of Christ, who make it so much of their business to extenuate the fall of man. Which we find those who were mere Philosophers, far more rational and ingenuous in, than those who pretend so highly to reason; but I think with as little of it as any, supposing the Scriptures to be of Divine authority. But it is not here our business to consider the opinions of those who pretend to Christianity, but only of such who pretending only to reason, have yet consented with the doctrine of the Scriptures as to the degeneracy of the Souls of men, that it lies in an Apostasy from God, and having lost those perfections which they had before.

*That*

Seet 16.

2.

In aur. Carm.

Pag. 258.

*That man's will is the cause of his Apostasie ; this we have already manifested at large from the testimony and reason of Simplicius, and Hierocles is as large and clear in it as the other, with expressions much of the same nature. Μίσθ γδ ἔστ' ἡ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἑστία ἧς τε δὲ νόον ἔχει καὶ θεόν, καὶ ἧς μηδέποτε νοεῖν πεφυκότων, ἀνέσι περὶ ἐκείνα, καὶ κατὰσι πρὸς ταῦτα, νῦν κλήσι καὶ ἀποβολῇ, πρὸς τὴν θεῖαν ὁμοίωσιν καὶ τὴν θείαν, διὰ τὸ ὅτι φύσας ἀμύβιον ἀναμίσθ' οἰκεῖται. Man's nature lying between those beings which perpetually contemplate God, and those which are incapable of it, it sometimes ascends to those, and sometimes descends to these, according as it observes or rejects the dictates of reason, and so by reason of the indifferency of the will is liable to take upon it the similitude of God or a beast. Ταῦτ' ἐν ὁ περὶ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐγνωκὸς ἑστίας, οἷα πῶς αὐδαίρετα πῖμαλ' ἔχουσιν οἱ ἀνθρώποι, καὶ πῶς Τλήμονες καὶ τάλανες ἢ αὐτῶν αἰετοῖσι γινώσκαι. And whoever thoroughly considers this, will easily understand, how men are the causes of their own evils, and become unhappy and miserable through their own choice and self-wills. Which he brings in by way of explication of that truly golden Pythagorean Verse,*

Γνώση δὲ ἀνθρώπου αὐδαίρετα πῖμαλ' ἔχουσι  
Τλήμονας.

*Men are grown miserable through their own fault. And afterwards Hierocles excellently describes the nature of evil in these words, ἢ ὅτι συμφυὲς αἷμα καὶ ὀπίστητον ἡμῖν κακόν, ἢ τῷ αὐτεξούτῳ ὡς εἶναι κίνησις. Both our natural and contracted pravity, is nothing else but the unnatural motion of our free wills: according to which, saith he, ἐναντῆσαι τοῖς θεοῖς νόμοις πειρώμεθα, ἔστιν ἐπαυδανόμοιοι ὅσον ἐαυτοῖς βλάπτομεν, διὰ τὸ δοκεῖν ἀνίστασθαι Θεῷ· ἀλλ' μόνον τῷ τυφλῷ ὁρῶντες, ὅτι ἐδυνήθημεν ἀφινάσαι ἧς ἐκείνους δεσμῶν. We dare to contradict the Laws of God, not being sensible how much we injure our selves when we do it; and only look at this, that we are able to cast off the reins of God's Laws from our necks. And he truly saith, That it is the greatest abuse of liberty to offend God, when we either do what he forbids, or neglect what he requires. Ἴνα ἐκατέρωθεν τὸ ἀδελόπηθ' ἐαυτοῖς πληρώσωσιν οἱ τὸ θεῖον νόμον ἐμβαίνοντες, πῶς τε μὴ ποιεῖν τὰ θεοεσταγμένα καὶ πῶς ποιεῖν τὰ ἀπαγορευμένα. So that on both sides men bring misery upon themselves, by transgressing the divine Law,*  
both



both by not doing what they are commanded, and by doing what they are forbidden. So that he fully ascribes the origin of evil to the *παραξέσιον κίνημα* ἢ *ἡ φύσις διαπεδὼν*, as he calls it, the irregular motion of the will of man, which we have already shewed to be the doctrine of the Scriptures.

As to the necessity of the soul's recovery from this condition, in order to her felicity, we have these Philosophers expressing their consent with the Scriptures; Porphyrius, as St. Augustine tells us in the end of his first book, *De regressu animæ*, doth acknowledge the necessity of a way of recovering souls, which should be universal. *Cum autem dicit Porphyrius, Nondum receptam unam quandam sectam, quæ universalem viam animæ contineat liberandæ, — nondumque in suam notitiam eandem viam historiali cognitione perlatam, proculdubio confitetur esse aliquam, sed nondum in suam venisse notitiam.* But the necessity of the purgation of the soul in order to its felicity, is so largely and fully discoursed of by all the Platonists and Pythagoreans, that it will be needless to insist upon it. Thus far then we find the account given of the origin of evil in Scripture to be embraced by the sublimest of the Heathen Philosophers, as most rational and satisfactory; which was the thing to be proved.

3.  
August, de Civit. Dei, l. 10. c. 32.

Neither do we find only the main of this account acknowledged as rational, but we may trace some not obscure footsteps of the truth of the particular circumstances which concern the fall of man, among the Heathens: such as the Devil's envying of man's happiness, his disguising himself under the form of a Serpent, and man's being thrown out of Paradise upon his fall.

Sect. 17.

1. *The Devil's envying the happiness of man.* It hath been truly observed by a learned man, that the original of that very ancient opinion among the Heathen, *de invidia Dæmonis*, had its rise from the history of the fall of man, which he hath made out so fully, that I shall the less need to prove it. And that there was an undoubted tradition of some malignant spirits, which envied the welfare of mankind, appears by that ample Testimony of Plutarch, in his *Dio*, mentioned by the same Author; *Οὐκ οἶδα, μὴ ἢ πᾶν παλαιὸν ἢ ἀπὸ πάντων ἀναγκαζόμενον προσδεχέσθαι λόγον, ὡς τὰ φαῦλα δαιμόνια καὶ βλάσφημα, προσφονεύοντες ἀγαθοῖς ἀνθρώποις καὶ ἢ πείθεσιν ἐνιστάμενα, ταρα-*

D. Casaub. Original of temporal evils.

χαῖς καὶ φόβος ἐπάγει, σείοντα καὶ σφάλλοντα τὴν ἀρετὴν ὥς μὴ διαμείναντες ἀπ᾽ αὐτῆς ἐν τῷ καλῷ καὶ ἀίετοι, βελτίων ὁ ἐπείνων μοίρας μὲν τὴν τελευτὴν πύχουσιν. Plutarch was much troubled to give an account of the apparitions which Brutus and Dio, who were learned and philosophical men, were haunted withall; and doubts he can give no just account of it, unless he embraced that very ancient tradition (which yet seemed absurd and incredible,) viz. That there are certain wicked and malignant Dæmons, which envy good men, and withstand their enterprizes, by raising fears and troubles to them, that so they might hinder them in their pursuit of vertue; lest, if they continue stedfast and unmoveable in good, they should be at last partakers of greater felicity than they enjoy. There being then so ancient a tradition of such ὑβερσαὶ δαίμονες, (as the learned man mentioned hath more fully shewed in his notes on this place of Plutarch,) gives a great confirmation to the truth of what the Scripture reports concerning the Devil's being so great an Instrument in procuring the fall of man. To him therefore I refer the inquisitive Reader, and shall not add to the Testimonies of him

Plutarch. de I-  
sid. & Osir.  
p. 361.

cited, that of Xenocrates in Plutarch, de Iside & Osiride, where he saith that the calamities of life and misfortunes men meet with, do not agree with that veneration which we have for the Deity and good spirits, Ἄλλ' ἔτι φύσας ἐν τῷ περὶ αὐτοῦ μεγάλαις μὲν καὶ ἰσχυροῖς δυνάμεσιν ἢ καὶ σκυθρωπῶς, εὐχαίρουσι τοῖς τοιούτοις. But that there are in the air some great and potent Beings, which are of a surly and malignant nature, and joyce to doe men all the mischief they can. Iamblichus, in his answer to Porphyrius concerning the Egyptian Mysteries, undertakes to give an account of these evil spirits or dæmons, and that from them the origin of evil in the world is; for thus he speaks (as he is translated by Ficinus) Si verum est quod de Idolis dicebamus, improbique Dæmonibus, hinc sane exoritur multiplex origo malorum. Simulant enim Deorum præsentiam, dæmonumque bonorum, ideoque cultorem suum jubent esse justum, ut ipsi videantur boni, sicut & Dii; quoniam vero natura sunt mali, rogati mala inferre, libenter inferunt, atque nobis ad injusta conducunt. Hi sunt omnino qui & in oraculis mentiuntur & fallunt, & turpia consolunt atque peragunt. By which we see he acknowledgeth some spirits whose natures are wicked, and help men to doe evil; and that these very spirits may sometimes

Iamblichus de  
myster. p. 105.



sometimes command that which is good, lest they should be suspected, to be what they are, of a wicked and malignant Nature, which only design the ruin of men. By which we have a good account of whatever was commendable delivered by the *Heathen oracles*, which yet might come from the *Devil* still, by this confession of *Jamblichus* himself.

For the Devils appearing under the form of a *Serpent*, It is very probably conjectured, that from hence it was that the Prince of those who contended with *Saturn*, was by that *Ænigmatical* writer *Pherecydes Cyrius* called *Ὀφιοεύς*. *Celsus* who had so little skill in antiquity as to think that the *History* of *Moses* was as to many passages of it taken out of *Heathen Fables*, insists on this very story of *Ophioneus* as the groundwork of that relation in *Genesis* concerning the Fall. But *Origen* well answers him, *ὅσα ἔν, εἰ ἐγκαλῶν ἡμῖν ὡς σφαλλομένοις ἀσέβη-  
-στατα, καὶ ἀποπεπλανημένοις δειῶν ἀνιγνῶσθαι, αὐτὶς σαφῶς σφάλλεται; μὴ κατανοήσας ὅτι τὰ πολλὰ ἔμνον Ἡρακλείῃ καὶ Φερεκύδῃ ἀρχαῖότερα, ἀλλὰ καὶ Ὅμηρῳ, Μωϋσέως γράμματα εἰσῆγαγε καὶ περὶ πονηρῶν τέτε καὶ ἐκπεσόντων καὶ ἐβανίων λόγον.* See therefore if this rare An-  
-tiquary who chargeth us with impiety in corrupting and alter-  
-ing the *Heathen Fables*, be not himself more justly chargeable with the same fault, not understanding the far greater antiquity of the writings of *Moses*, than either of *Heraclitus*, or *Pherecydes*, or *Homer* himself, which reports the story of that evil one which fell from Heaven, *ὁ ὅστις (παρ' οὗ Φερεκύδῃ γέροντι Ὀφιοεύς) αἶψα ῥοδωρὶ τῷ ἐκβληθῆναι τῷ δαίμονι Φερεκύδῃ καὶ ἀνδρῶν πιαυτὰ πνα αἰνιέσθαι, ἐπαγγελία δέ τῃ καὶ μεζόνων ἀπατήσας τὸ διελύττεσθαι καὶ ὡς συνακολουθεῖν λέγεται καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ.*

Sect. 18.

2.

Orig. c. Celsus, lib. 6.

For the *Serpent* (from which *Ophioneus* in *Pherecydes* derived his name) which was the cause why man was cast forth of Paradise, doth intimate some such thing, while under a pretence of Divinity, and of a better condition, he first deceived the woman, and by her means the man. *Cælius Rhodiginus* calls this *Ophioneus Dæmonicum Serpentem, qui antesignanus fuerit agminis à Divinæ mentis placito deficientis*. This *Pherecydes*, as appears by *Eusebius*, had much converse with the *Phœnicians*; where he purposely speaks concerning this *Ophioneus*. Now the *Phœnicians*, as *Eusebius* likewise tells us, worshiped their God under the Form of a *Serpent*; which probably might be occasioned by the Devils ambition and tyranny over men;

Q q q

that

Antiq. lect. l. 2. c. 7.  
Euseb. de Prep. Evang. l. 1. cap. 10.

that would be worshipped among them in that very *Form* wherein he had done so much mischief to the world. It was very early in the world, when the *Phœnicians* and *Egyptians*, did begin to adore their *Gods* under the *Form* of *Serpents*, for the beginning of it is attributed to *Taautus* by *Eusebius*, ἡ μὲν ἔν τῷ Δράκοντι φύσιν καὶ τὴν ὄρεον αὐτὸς ἐξεδείξεν ὁ Τάαυτ καὶ μετ' αὐτὸν αἰεὶ φοινίκες τε καὶ Ἀιγύπτιοι. Neither was this only among the *Phœnicians* and *Egyptians*, but where-ever the *Devil* reigned, the *Serpent* was had in some peculiar veneration : thence *Justin Martyr* saith, ἡ δὲ παντὶ νομιζομένων παρ' υἱῶν θεῶν ὅρις σύμβολον μέγα καὶ μυστήριον ἀναγράφεται the *Serpent* was the *Symbol* of adoration among them ; and was the proper *Indicium*, or note of a consecrated place, as is evident by that of *Persius*.

Apolog. 2.

Satyr. 1.

Pinge duos angues ; pueri, sacer est locus.

Thence the *Scholiast* on *Aristophanes* on that place in *Plutus*, Ἐξηγάτω ἐν Νοδράκοντι ἐν τῇ νεῷ, observes κοινῶς πᾶσι τοῖς ἡρώσι δράκοντες παρατίθεντο, so that where-ever any *God* or *Hero* was to be worshipped, there were *Serpents* painted to denote so much. So *Orus Apollo* saith of the *Egyptians*, ἡ βασιον ὅτιν ἑλλωσι βασιλισκον χερσὲν περιτιδέσαι τοῖς θεοῖς, they were wont to put the form of a golden *Basilisk* to their *Gods*. *Heinsius* conceives that the first worship of *Apollo* at *Delphi* was under the form of a *Serpent*, whether *Nonnus* tells us that *Cadmus* the *Phœnician* went upon his first coming into *Beotia*, and from hence he derives the name *Pytho* from the Hebrew פֶּתֶן which signifies a *Serpent*. Ut non dubitandum sit, saith he, quin *Pythius Apollo*, hoc est, *Spurcus ille spiritus*, quem *Hebræi* Ob & Abaddon, *Hellenista* ad verbum, Ἀπολλώνια, cæteri Ἀπύλλωια dixerunt, sub hac forma qua miseriam humano generi intexit, primo cultus sit in *Græcia*. And which is further observable, the *Devil* was always ambitious to have the world think that the knowledge of good and evil was to come by the *Serpent* still ; thence the famous oracle of *Apollo* here at *Delphi* ; thence came the use of *Serpents* so much in *Divination*, thence שָׂרָפָה signifies to divine, from שָׂרָפָה a *Serpent* ; and so among the *Greeks* ὄϊον ζεύς, is taken in the same sence, from ὄϊον a *Serpent*. So that excellent *Glossographer* *Hesychius* ; ὄϊον δὲ ὄφης.

Heins. Aristarch. p. 18. ed. 1627.



ὁφ' ὅτι καὶ λέγονται ἐς τὰς μαντείας τὸς ὄφεις ἔχειν ὅς καὶ διονύσιος ἔλεγον.

The *Serpent* was reckoned among the *pedestria auspicia* by the *Romans*; and *Homer* tells in that solemn divination concerning the *Greeks* success at *Troy* there appears,

δράκον ἐπὶ νότα δάσειν.

*Iliad. B.*

Which faith *Heinsius*, is an exact description of the *Nachas*; whom they would have so called from the marks on his back, which they accurately observed in divination. Thus we see how careful the *Devil* was to advance his honour in the world under that *Form*, wherein he had deceived mankind into so much folly and misery.

We meet with some remainders of man's being cast out of *Paradise*, upon his fall among the *Heathens*. *Origen* thinks that *Plato* by his converse with the *Jews* in *Ægypt*, did understand the *History* of the fall of man, which he after his way *enigmatically* describes in his *Symposiacks*. Where he brings in *Porus* the God of plenty feasting with the rest of the Gods; after supper *Penia* comes a begging to the door; *Porus* being drunk with *Nectar*, goes into *Jupiter's* garden, and there falls asleep; *Penia* observing it, steals to him, and by this deceit conceived by him. In this *Fable* of *Plato*, *Origen* takes notice what a near resemblance the garden of *Jupiter* hath to *Paradise*, *Penia* to the *Serpent* which circumvented *Adam*, and *Porus* to man who was deceived by the *Serpent*. Which he conceives more probable because of *Plato* his custom, τὰ με-

3.

*Origen. c. Cels.  
l. 4. p. 189.*

γάλα ἐαυτὸς φανέμενα δέγματα κρύψαι μὲν διὰ τὸς πολλὰς ἐν τῷ τῷ μύθῳ ἡμῶν, to wrap up those excellent things he knew under some fables because of the vulgar; for which he after speaks of his custom in altering and disguising what he had from the *Jews*, lest he should too much displease the *fabulous Greeks*, if he should adhere too close to the *Jews*, who were so infamous among them. Some have thought the story of *Paradise* was preserved among the *Heathens* in the fable of the gardens of *Adonis* which comes near that of *Eden*; but what footsteps may be gathered of the truth of *Scripture-history* in the *Heathen Mythology*, will appear afterwards. Thus much here then may serve to have manifested the account which the *Scripture* gives of the *Origin* of evil by the

fall of man to be in its self rational, and attested by the consent of such Persons who cannot be suspected of any partiality to the Scriptures.

Sect. 20.

We come now to consider the other grand difficulty which concerns the *Origin of evil*, and the *truth of Divine providence* together. Which is, that if *sin* be the cause of *misery*, and there be a *God* which governs the world ; whence comes it to pass, that the worst of men do so frequently escape sufferings, and the best do so commonly undergo them ? This hath been in all ages of the world where men have been Philosophical and inquisitive, one of the great inquiries which the minds of men have been perplexed about. The true and full resolution of which question, depends much upon those grounds and principles which are discovered to us by *Divine revelation* in the *Scriptures*, concerning the grounds of *God's patience* towards wicked men, the nature and end of *sufferings* which good men are exercised with. And certainly this should very much commend the *Scriptures* to all sober and inquisitive persons, that they contain in them the most clear and certain grounds of satisfaction to the minds of men, in such things wherein they are otherwise so irresolved ? But of that afterwards : Our present business is to give an account of this difficulty from *natural reason*, which will be most satisfactorily done by the producing those grounds from which they have resolved this question, *cur malis bene, & bonis male*, who either have not had, or at least owned any thing of *Divine revelation*. I begin with that which doth concern the *prosperity* and *impunity* of *wicked men*, which men have with more confidence insisted on on this account, because all men could not but understand a general reason of *sufferings*, by reason there were none whose *consciences* could wholly acquit them of *evil actions* ; but why persons notoriously *wicked* should live in *impunity*, when others *suffer*, that they were unable to give an account of. And this was the common pretence of *Atheism*, as *Simplicius* tells us, συμβάλειν δὲ πῶς καὶ διὰ τὸ ἀναποδείκναι πιστεῖν, καὶ διὰ τὸ ὁρᾶν ποτὲ μὲν ἀγαθὸς δυστυχῆντας, ποτὲ δὲ καὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς εὐδαιμόνους, ὀλιγοῦσιν ὧν ἔχουσιν πολλήν τιμον, καὶ χάριν διδέναι τῇ τραγωδίᾳ λέγειν.

Comment. in  
Epistol. c. 38.  
p. 223.



Τολμῶ κατειπεῖν μήποτ' ἄν εἰσὶν θεοὶ  
Κακοὶ γὰρ ἐτυχεῖντες ὀππλήτισταί με.

*It comes to pass, that such who have no grounded belief of a Deity, when they observe the miseries of good men, and the tranquillity and felicity of bad men, they regard not the common notions they have of a Deity, and are ready to cry out with the Tragædian (or rather of Aristophanes in his Plutus.)*

*Shall I not dare to say there are no Gods,  
When those do prosper who have injured me ?*

And it is observable, that the most of those who have taken occasion amongst the *Heathens* to question providence, have done it upon some remarkable injury which they have conceived to be done to themselves, and so we have ground to think that it was more passion and interest, than any clear reason which was the inducement to it. So *Diagoras* resolves to set up for an *Atheist*, because the perjured person was not struck dead in the place.

And *Jason* in *Seneca* when he sees *Medea* fly away after killing his children, cries out,

*Testare nullos esse qua veheris Deos.*

*Thou tell'st the world there are no Gods that way  
Where thou dost fly.*

And so *Claudian*, who largely reasons the case on both sides, for providence and against it, at last tells us what it was which was the main cause of his doubts, viz. the long impunity of *Rufinus*.

*Abstulit hunc tandem Rufini pena tumultum  
Absolvitque Deos.*

*Rufinus death doth clear the Gods, and set  
My mind at ease.*

But

Tully l. 3. de  
Nat. Deor.

But because some carry it higher, as *Cotta* in *Tully*, who reasons the most (as became a *States-man*) in reference to such persons who had been *useful* or *harmful* to *Common-wealths*, we may suppose there might be somewhat more of *reason* than *Interest* in such argumentations; and yet even in those *discourses* we may still find that the main *original* of this quarrel against *providence*, was an over-high *esteem* of themselves, that they thought they *deserved* better from the *Gods*, than to receive such injuries, or undergo such calamities. Therefore *Cotta* cries out on *Providence*, because such persons who were *useful* to the *Roman Common-wealth*, were destroyed, when the enemies to it escaped, as though *providence* had been only a *Tutelar Deity* of *Rome*, and had nothing to do elsewhere. Thence he cries out, if there be *providence*, why were the two *Scipio's* destroyed in *Spain* by the *Carthaginians*? Why was *Maximus* killed by *Hannibal*? Why were the *Romans* with *Paulus* ruined at *Cannæ*? Why did *Regulus* undergo so much cruelty by the *Carthaginians*? Why did not *Africanus* die in his own bed? Nay, saith he, to come nearer home, why is my *Uncle Rutilius* in banishment? Why was my friend *Drusus* killed in his own house? On the other side, why did *Marius* die in peace, and the most cruel *Cinna* enjoy so long tranquillity? with many other instances of both sorts. But this is it which I take notice of these for, because we hereby see how common it is for men to question providence, more out of *Passion* and *Interest*, than out of any solid grounds of reason.

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Let us therefore appeal from persons who were particularly engaged by some private *interest* in those passages, from whence they would infer that there was no *providence*, to such who stood by unconcerned, and made use of the free dictates of their *reason* in these cases. And such persons when they come to reason the case like *Philosophers*, and men out of *passion*, have given *satisfactory* and *rational accounts* why *God* in his wise *providence* may sometimes suffer the *worst* of men, to go on in *impunity*, when *good men* may go through the troubles of this world. As,

I. God forbears wicked men, to propound the example of his goodness to their imitation, to teach them not to revenge their injuries too greedily on each other. This *Plutarch*, in that admirable



mirable discourse of his on this subject, insists on as his first *Plutarch de his reason, why God doth not presently punish wicked men. For, qui sero puni-* faith he out of Plato, God hath set forth himself in the midst of *untur à numine. p. 550. ed. Fr.* the world for our imitation; and true virtue is nothing else but an imitation of the Divine nature. And therefore God, saith Plato, gave man the use of sight, that by the sight of the heavenly bodies, and the exact motions, which are in them, men should learn τὸ εὐμαρὸν καὶ τετάχμενον, that which was comely and orderly, and hate all disorderly and irregular motions; For as he excellently speaks: ὁ γὰρ ὅτιν ὁ, π μείζον ἀνδρῶν ἀπολαύειν θεῶ πέρυκεν ἢ τὸ μιμήσθαι, καὶ διώκει τῶ ἐν ἐκείνῳ καλῶν καὶ ἀγαθῶν εἰς ἀρετὴν κατὰσθαι. There is no greater benefit man can receive from God, than to attain true virtue by the imitation and pursuit of those perfections which are in him. And thence, saith Plutarch, God forbears to punish wicked men presently, not lest if he should punish them he might do that he would repent of afterwards, ἀλλ' ἡμῶν τὸ περὶ τὰς τιμωρίας διεκδίδει καὶ κόβρον ἀφαιρῶν, but that he might take away the fury and violence of men in revenging their injuries on each other, that they should not do it in wrath and anger, with as much eagerness as they satisfy their hunger and thirst, whereby they do, ἐπιπιδῶν τοῖς λευπηκόσιν, leap upon them who have injured them, with as much fury as a wild beast upon his prey; but men should learn to imitate τὴν ἐκείνου πραότητα καὶ μέλλησιν, God's gentleness and patience, whereby he gives the offender time to consider with himself what he hath done, before he doth severely punish him. As Plato when his Boy had angered him, stood still a while without striking him, τὸν θυμὸν καλῶν, as he said, punishing himself first for his anger, before he would chastise the Boy for his fault; and Archytas when he saw how negligent his workmen had been, and began to be very angry with them, told them, εὐτυχίτε ὅτι ὀργίζομαι ὑμῶν, It is well for you that I am angry with you. Now saith Plutarch, if the consideration of this forbearance in men should tend to moderate mens heat and violence, how much more should the consideration of the lenity and patience of God, do it! καὶ θεῶν ἡγεῖσθαι μίερον ἀρετῆς τῶ πραότητι καὶ τὴν μεγαλομύθειαν and to account gentleness and forbearance to be an imitation of divine perfections. Now what can be more rational and agreeable to our apprehensions of a divine nature than

than this is, that he should shew his goodness to all, and by his forbearance of so many, teach the world more meekness and gentleness towards each other? For if offences rise by the quality of the person against whom they are committed, no injuries can be so great in one man to another, as those affronts are men put upon God by their continual provocations of him: And if God then be of so infinite patience to forbear such who have offended him, what justice and reason is there, but that men should express more lenity and patience towards each other? So Hierocles excellently speaks, μιμεῖται ἡ ἐν τοῖς φίλοις μέτροις ὁ Θεὸς, ὃς μισεῖ μὴ ἐξ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου, τὸ πᾶς φιλάνθρωπιαν ἀγαθὸν κοινῶ πρὸς γένει ἀεπείων. *A good man imitates God in the measures of friendship, who hates no man, and extends his loving kindness to all mankind.* Of which Seneca likewise somewhere speaks. Ne Deos quidem immortales ab hac tam effusa benignitate sacrilegi negligentesque eorum deterrent; utuntur natura sua, & cuncta, interque illa ipsos munerum suorum malos interpretes, juvant. *The Divine Benignity extends its self to all, even to such as affront and dishonour them, and abuse the gifts they bestow upon them.* And since there is so much truth and reason in that of Plato τὸ εἶναι ὡς ἀγαθὸν τὸ ὁμοιοῦναι Θεῷ, *It is the height of goodness to be like to God, we see what excellent reason there is for that command of our Saviour, Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the highest; for he is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father is merciful.*

2. God forbears presently to punish wicked men, to give them time to become better. This the same excellent Moralist gives as another account of God's patience, that thereby he gives them χρόνον πρὸς ἐπιστροφὴν, a space to repent, as the Scripture call it. For men, saith Plutarch, in their punishments look at nothing further than mere satisfying their revenge and malice, and that makes them pursue those that have offended them with so much rage and eagerness; but God, saith he, aims at the cure of those who are not utterly incurable, to such he gives, μεταβαλεῖν χρόνον, a time to reform in. Here he brings in the examples of such who were bad at first, and came afterwards to be changed from what they were; for which he instances

Luk. 6. 35, 36.

Plutarch.  
p. 551.

Rev. 2. 21.



instances in *Cecrops*, who was thence called *Διφυς*, because from a cruel severe *Prince*, he became gentle and mild; and so *Gelon* and *Hieron* of *Sicily*, and *Pisistratus* the Son of *Hippocrates*, who, from being *Usurpers*, became excellent *Princes*. If *Miltiades*, saith he, had been cut off while he acted the part of a *Tyrant*, or *Cimon* in his *Incest*, or *Themistocles* in his *Debaucheries*, what had become of *Marathon*, *Eurymedon*, *Dianium*, by which the *Athenians* got so great glory and liberty? and as he well observes, ἐδὲν ᾧ αἱ μεγάλαι φύσεις μηδὲν ἐκφέρουσιν, *Great Spirits* doe nothing mean; ἐδὲ ἀργεῖ δι' ὀξύτητα τὸ σφοδρὸν ἐν αὐταῖς καὶ δευσιθεῖον, ἀλλ' ἐν σάλῳ διαφέεσθαι πρὶν εἰς τὸ μένιμον καὶ καδεσπικὸς ᾧδ' ἐλθεῖν. *That sharp and active spirit that is in them can never lie at rest by reason of its vigour, but they are tossed up and down, as it were in a Tempest, till they come to a settled composed life.* But as the multitude of weeds argues the richness and softness of the ground, though for the sake of those weeds one not skill'd in husbandry would not account such ground worth looking after; so, saith he, ἀπὸ πολλὰ καὶ φαῦλα προεξανθίσιν αἱ μεγάλαι φύσεις: *great spirits usually bring forth no commendable fruits at first; which we considering the danger and hurtfulness of, are presently for cutting them down; but one that more wisely considers the generous nature which may lie under this ill fruit, waits time and leisure, till reason and age begin to master these head-strong passions.* And therefore according to the prudent Law of the *Egyptians*, the woman with child must be reprieved till the time of her delivery.

3. *God spares some wicked men from punishment to make them instruments of his justice in punishing others.* Ἐνίοις ᾧ ἀμέλει καὶ κολασαῖς ἐτέρων πονηρῶν, ὥστε δημοκρίτοις, ὑπὸ χεῖρα τοῦ δαιμόνιον, as *Plutarch* goes on, *God spares some from punishment, that by them he might punish others.* Which he supposeth to be the case of all *Tyrants*; and thereby *Cotta's* difficulty concerning *Marius*, *Cinna*, *Sylla*, and those other cruel and tyrannical persons, who had usurped authority among them, is clearly taken off: For *Divine Providence* might let those *Trees* grow from whence he intended to take his *Rods* to scourge others withall. *God* makes the same use of *Tyrants* (saith *Plutarch*) to *Common-wealths*, that *Physicians* do of the gall of a *Hyæna* and other hurtful creatures; which may be good

for curing some dangerous diseases; so may the *Tyrannical severity* and *sharpness* of such persons be continued ἡ τὸ νοσῆν ἀπαλλάξαι καὶ ἰατῶσαι, till the diseases of the political body be cured by these sharp medicines. Such a one was *Phalaris* to the *Agri-gentines*, and *Marius* to the *Romans*: and the Oracle told the *Sicyonians* in express terms, μαστιγνόμεν δίδου τὴν πόλιν. the City wanted some severe discipline. Thence *Totilas*, when he found what strange success he had in his enterprises, called himself *Flagellum Dei*, and thought God raised him up on purpose to be a scourge for the sins of the world. And no doubt those strange passages of the *Roman Common-wealth* (which made *Caro* at least dispute providence, and say, *res divinas multum habere caliginis*, when he saw *Pompey* successful as long as he served his ambition, but presently overthrown when he stood for the *Common-wealth*) these things, I say, had a higher end than they looked at, which was to make both *Pompey* and *Cæsar* the instruments of Divine justice to punish the *Romans* for their lusts, ambition and cruelty, which were never greater than in that Age. Now then, if God must justly punish Offenders, why may he not spare some to make them his instruments in the punishing of others, especially since after he hath used his rods, he may cast them into the fire too? as was evident in the instance of *Cæsar*, who, after all his slaughters and triumphs, was murdered in the Senate, and that by some who had been as active as any for him. And herein Divine Justice, both as to the punishment of the persons, and the means of it, hath been very remarkable in multitudes of instances, which every ones reading may afford him.

4 Therefore, another account why God may spare wicked men a great while, is, That divine providence might more remarkably be observed in the manner of their punishment afterwards. *Plutarch* tells us of *Callippus*, who was stabb'd by his enemies with the same dagger with which he had killed *Dion* under a pretence of friendship. And when *Mitius* the *Argive* was killed in a tumult, afterwards, upon the day of a solemn shew, a brass Statue in the market place fell upon his murderer, and killed him there. But most remarkable is the story of *Belsus* recorded by the same Author, who having killed his Father, and a long time concealed it, goes one night to



to supper to some *Friends*, and while he was there, thrusts up his spear into a *Swallow's* nest, and pulls it down, and kills the young ones; his *Friends* asking him the reason of so strange an action: Οὐ γὰρ (ἐφη) μὲ πάλαι καταμαρτυροῦσιν αὐταὶ ψευδῶς καὶ καταβοᾶσιν, ὡς ἀπεκτενόντ' ἃ πατέρα. *Do not you hear, saith he, how they falsely accuse me, and cry out, that I have killed my Father?* Which being by the persons present carried to the *King*, and the truth of it found out, he was executed for it. Such strange ways doth providence sometimes use to shew how vigilant it is, even when we think it sleeps the most.

5. *Though God spares the persons of wicked men, he doth not deferr their punishment*, when the thoughts of their evil actions is the greatest torment to them; *Maxima peccati poena est, peccasse*, as *Seneca* speaks. Sin bears its own punishment along with it. Wickedness is δεινὴ πρὸς βίῃς δυσχερὲς οἰκίσκη, the most exquisite contriver of misery, which fills the minds of those who commit it with continual consternations, anxieties and perplexities of mind. But as that often and deservedly cited Author on this subject, *Plutarch* tells us, most men are in this like *Children*, who when they behold malefactors in the *Theatres* in their cloth of gold, and purple robes, with their crowns on their heads dancing about, they admire them, and imagine them to be most happy men, till they see them lashed and beaten, and fire come out from their brave apparel; so saith he, as long as men see others in their pomp and grandeur, they think them far from punishment, till they behold their execution, which, saith he, is not so much the entrance of their punishment, as the perfection of it. So that the longer the time of their lives is, the longer is the time of their punishment here; ἐδὲ γινέσονται ἐκολάωσαν, ἀλλ' ἐχέμεν καλὰ ὄψοι· they are not punished when they grow old, but they are grown old in punishments. Cannot we say a person is punished while he is in prison and hath his fetters upon him, till his execution comes? nor that one that hath drunk poison, is a dying while he walks about till the cold comes to his heart, and kills him? if we deny, saith he, that all the inquietudes, horrors and anxieties of mind which wicked men have, are no part of their punishment, we may as well say that a fish which hath swallowed the hook is not taken, because he is not fryed, or cut in pieces. So it is with every wicked man, he hath swallowed the hook when he

hath committed an evil action (τὸ γλυκὺ τὸ ἀδικίας ὥστερ δέλαρ εὐδὸς ἤξειδονε) and this conscience within him, as he expresseth it,

Θύνῃ βολαῖ· πέλαι· ὡς διασβεῖ.

Isa. 57. 21.

Which in the Prophet's expression is, *the wicked are like a troubled Sea, which casts forth nothing but mire and dirt.* As Apollodorus dreamt, that he was flead and boyled by the Scythians, and that his heart spake to him out of the Cauldron, Ἐγὼ σοι τέτων αἰτία, *I am the cause of all this.* God deals by wicked men, as Caligula was wont to say of those he commanded to be executed, *ferit ut sentiant se mori*, he so punishes them, as to make them sensible of their punishments. And as Tacitus speaks of cruel and wicked persons, *quorum mentes si recludantur, possint affici laniatus & ictus; quando ut corpora verberibus, ita scævitia, libidine, malis consultis animus dilaceretur.* Wickedness is the only fury which continually haunts and lashes those who delight in it, and leaves still behind it αἰχρὰ καὶ φοβερά πλῆθ, *loathsome and terrible perturbations*, secret gripings of Conscience and self-condemning thoughts for their folly and wickedness; like *Lysimachus*, who for extreme thirst offered his Kingdom to the *Getæ* to quench it, which when he had done, φεῦ τὸ ἐμῆς κακίας, ὅς δι' ἡδονῇ ἔπαυ βραχυταίν, ἐπέστημι βασιλείας πλινυαίνης. *What a wretch was I* (saith he) *to lose such a Kingdom for so short a pleasure!* And though wicked men be not sensible of the loss of a far more glorious Kingdom than this of *Lysimachus*, viz. that of Heaven, yet they cannot but be sensible how much they have lost that Kingdom which every good man hath in the tranquillity of his spirit, and the command of his passions.

6. *The time that God spares wicked men, is not so long as we think for.* It is all one, as *Plutarch* saith, as if we should complain, that the malefactor was punished in the evening, and not in the morning; God's forbearance is but for a very little time, compared with his own duration. We measure God by the short hour-glass of our own time, when we are so ready to confine him to our measures. The time seems long to us, but it is as nothing in it self: ἐπεὶ πῶς τε τοῖς πᾶν ἀνθρώπων βίη δαΐσμημα, τὸ μὲν ἐστὶ· *the whole life of man compared with eternity is nothing.* Besides, all this time God suffers wicked



wicked men to live here, he hath them under safe custody; he doth but let them take the air within the prison-walls, or it may be they may play and sport themselves there, but there is no possibility of escaping out of the hands of Divine justice.

7. God forbears wicked men here, because the time is to come wherein God intends to punish them. This is the highest vindication of Divine Providence as to the present impunity of wicked men in the world, because this is not the proper season for the open execution of Justice. There are but few in comparison whom Justice causeth to be executed in the prison, of what are reserved for the general Assizes; God reserves them for a fair and open trial, for the greater vindication of his honour, and manifestation of his Justice to the world. And although God's judgments even in this world be sometimes so remarkable, that we cannot but see a hand of Providence in them, yet they are but few whom God doth so remarkably punish here, to make us more firmly believe a day of Judgment to come. Which though it be most clearly and fully revealed in Scripture, yet the Heathens themselves from mere reason have had such a persuasion of it, that they have given this as another great reason, why God did forbear to punish wicked men here, because he did reserve them for future punishment. For, as the same Moralist speaks in the same discourse concerning the Soul, ἀγωνίζεσθαι ὅ ἀσπερ ἀθλητῆς καὶ ἡ *Plut. p. 561.* βίον, ὅταν ὁ διαγωνίζεσθαι τότε πυγμῶν καὶ ἀσπικόνων, this present life is the place of the soul's combat, which when it hath finished, it then receives according to its performance of it. And as he before speaks, Εἴς ἐστιν λόγος ὁ τῷ θεῷ τὴν πρόνοιαν ἑμὰ καὶ διακινῆναι τὸν ἀνθρώπου ψυχῆς βεβαιῶν, καὶ δάτερον ἐκ ἑστὶν ἀπολιπῆν, ἀναισθητὰ δάτερον. The same reason which confirms providence, doth likewise confirm the immortality of the soul; and if one be taken away, the other follows. Οὐδὲν ὁ τῇ ψυχῇ ἐν τῇ τε τελευτῇ, μᾶλλον εἰκός ἐστι καὶ τιμὰς ἀποδιδῶναι καὶ τιμωρίας. And if the soul doth subsist after death, it stands to the greatest reason, that it should there receive either reward or punishment. Thus we see how far natural light, and moral reason will carry men in the vindicating of Divine Providence, as to the present impunity of wicked men.

The other part which concerns the sufferings of good men is not of so great difficulty, because there are none so good as not to

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to have a mixture of evil in them, and as they have a mixture of evil, so they have but a mixture of punishment; none lying under so great miseries here, but withall they have some share in the comforts of this life. And therefore it is less wonder, that this part of Divine Providence which concerns the sufferings of good men, hath not wanted some among the Heathen Moralists who have made it their design to vindicate it; which setting aside what *Simplicius* on *Epictetus*, and many others have done, is fully performed by *Seneca* in his tract on this very subject, *cur bonis male sit, cum sit Providentia* (as *Marcus* restores the title of that book) wherein these following accounts are given of it.

*Senec. de Provid. c. 1.*  
 1. God brings them up as his children under sharp discipline for their future benefit. A good man in *Seneca's* language is, *discipulus Dei, æmulatorque, & vera progenies*: which in the language of the Scripture, is, one taught of God, a follower of God, and one born of him. Now, saith he, *Parens ille magnificus, virtutum non lenis exactor, sicut severi patres, durius educat. God, who is the great Father of good men, keeps them under discipline while under age, and by hardship fits them for the practice of vertue.* Thence he bids us take notice of the different indulgence of Fathers and Mothers to their Children; the Father he hastens them to School, suffers them not to be idle on their play-days, makes them toil, and sometimes cry; the Mother she is all for holding them in her lap, keeping them out of the Sun, and from catching cold, would not willingly have them either cry or take pains. *Patrium habet Deus adversus bonos animum, & illos fortius amat.* God bears the indulgence of a Father towards his children, and loves them with greater severity.

2. Good men receive benefit by their sufferings; *quicquid evenit in suum colorem trahit*, saith *Seneca* of a good man, which in the language of the Apostle is, every thing works together for his good. The Sea loseth nothing, saith he, of its saltness by the rivers running into it, neither doth a good man by the current of his sufferings. And of all benefits which he receives, that of the exercise and trial of his vertue and patience is most discernable. *Marcet sine adversario virtus*; as soon as Carthage was destroyed, Rome fell to Luxury: True wrestlers desire to have some to try their strength upon them; *cui non indus-*  
*trio*



*dustrio otium pœna est ?* an active spirit hates idleness and cowardise; for *etiamsi ceciderit, de genu pugnât*, though his legs be cut off, he will fight on his knees.

3. *It redounds to God's honour, when good men bear up under sufferings.* *Ecce par Deo dignum vir fortis cum mala fortuna compositus.* It is a spectacle God delights to see, a good man combat with calamities. God doth in Seneca's phrase *quosdam fastidio transire*, passeth them by in a slight; an old wrestler scorns to contend with a coward, one who is *vinci paratus*, ready to yield up presently. *Calamitates sub jugum mittere proprium magni viri est*, it argues a noble spirit to be able to subdue miseries.

4. *It tends to the trial and increase of their strength.* Seneca highly extols that speech of the Philosopher Demetrius, *Nil infelicius eo cui nihil unquam evenit adversi; non licuit enim illi se experiri.* He is the most unhappy man who never knew what misery meant; for he could never know what he was able to bear. And, as he saith; to pass ones life away *sine morfu animi*, without any trouble, it is *ignorare rerum naturæ alteram partem*, not to know what is upon the reverse of nature. *Idem licet fecerint qui integri revertuntur ex acie, magis spectatur qui saucius redit.* Though he that comes home found, might fight as well as he that is wounded; yet the wounded person hath the more pity, and is most cryed up for his valour. The Pilot is seen in a tempest, a Soldier in bat-tel, and a good man in sufferings. God doth by such as *Ma-sters doe by Scholars, qui plus laboris ab his exigunt, quibus certior spes est*: who set the best wits the hardest tasks.

5. *God exerciseth good men with sufferings, to discover the in-differency of those things which men value so much in the world, when he denies them to good men.* Blindness would be hateful, if none were blind but such whose eyes were put out; and therefore Appius and Metellus were blind. Riches are no good things, therefore the worst as well as the best have them. *Nulla modo magis potest Deus concupita traducere, quam si illa ad turpissimos desert, ab optimis abigit.* God could not tra-duce or defame those things more which men desire so much, than by taking them away from the best of men, and giving them to the worst.

6. That they might be *examples* to others of *patience* and *constancy*; For, as *Seneca* concludes, *nati sunt in exemplar*, they are born to be *patterns* to others. If to these things we add what the *Word of God* discovers concerning the *nature*, *grounds*, and *ends* of *afflictions*, and that *glory* which shall be *revealed*, in comparison with *which* exceeding *weight* of *glory*, these *light* and *momentary* *afflictions* are not at all to be *valued*, then we have a clear and full *vindication* of *Divine Providence*, as to the *sufferings* of good men, as well as to the *Impunity* of such as are *wicked*. But however, from hence we see how far the mere *light* of *reason* hath carried men in *resolving* these *difficulties* concerning *God's Providence* in the world, and what a *rational account* may be given of them, supposing *evil* of *punishment* to arise from *sin*, and that there is a *God* in the world, who is ready to punish the *wicked*, and to *reward* the *good*: Which was the thing to be shewed.

C H A P.



C H A P. IV.

Of the Origin of Nations.

*All mankind derived from Adam, if the Scriptures be true. The contrary supposition an introduction to Atheism. The truth of the History of the Flood. The possibility of an universal deluge proved. The Flood universal as to mankind, whether universal as to the Earth and Animals; no necessity of asserting either. Yet supposing the possibility of it demonstrated without creation of new waters. Of the Fountains of the deep. The proportion which the height of Mountains bears to the Diameter of the Earth. No Mountains much above three mile perpendicular. Of the Origin of Fountains. The opinion of Aristotle and others concerning it discussed. The true account of them from the vapours arising from the mass of subterraneous waters. Of the Capacity of the Ark for receiving the Animals, from Buteo and others. The truth of the deluge from the Testimony of Heathen Nations. Of the propagation of Nations from Noah's posterity. Of the beginning of the Assyrian Empire. The multiplication of mankind after the Flood. Of the Chronology of the LXX. Of the time between the Flood and Abraham, and the advantages of it. Of the pretence of such Nations, who called themselves Aborigines. A discourse concerning the first Plantation of Greece, the common opinion propounded and rejected. The Hellens not the first Inhabitants of Greece, but the Pelasgi. The large spread of them over the parts of Greece; Of their language different from the Greeks. Whence these Pelasgi came; that Phaleg was the Pelasgus of Greece, and the leader of that Colony, proved from Epiphanius: the language of the Pelasgi in Greece Oriental: thence an account given of the many Hebrew words in the Greek language, and the remainders of the Eastern languages in the Islands of Greece, both which not from the Phœnicians as Bochartus thinks, but from the old Pelasgi. Of the ground of the affinity between the Jews and Lacedæmonians. Of the peopling of America.*

THE next thing we proceed to give a rational account of, Sect. I.  
 in the History of the first ages of the World contained  
 in Scripture, is the peopling of the World from Adam. Which  
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is of great consequence for us to understand not only for the satisfaction of our curiosity as to the true *Origin of Nations*, but also in order to our believing the *truth* of the *Scriptures*, and the universal effects of the fall of man. Neither of which can be sufficiently cleared without this. For as it is hard to conceive how the effects of man's fall should extend to all mankind, unless all mankind were propagated from *Adam*; so it is unconceivable how the account of things given in *Scripture* should be true, if there were persons existent in the World long before *Adam* was. Since the *Scripture* doth so plainly affirm, *that God hath made of one blood all Nations of men, for to dwell on the face of the earth*; Some *Greek* copies read it  $\text{ὅς ἐνός}$ , leaving out  $\alphaἵμα$  which the *vulgar Latin* follows: the *Arabick* version to explain both, reads it *ex homine*, or as *De Dieu* renders it *ex Adamo uno*, there being but the difference of one letter in the *Eastern languages* between  $\text{אדם}$  and  $\text{אדם}$ , the one denoting *blood* and the other *man*. But if we take it as our more ordinary copies read it  $\text{ὅς ἐνός αἵμα}$ , yet thereby it is plain, that the meaning is not that all *mankind* was made of the same *uniform matter*, as the *Authour* of the *Pra-Adamites* weakly imagined, (for by that reason, not only mankind but the whole World might be said to be  $\text{ὅς ἐνός αἵμα}$  of the same blood, since all things in the World were at first formed out of the same matter,) but  $\alphaἵμα$  is taken there in the sense in which it occurs in the best *Greek* *Authours*, for the stock out of which men come: So *Homer*,

*Odyss.* π.

$\text{Εἰ ἐπὶ γ' ἐμὸς ἐστὶ καὶ αἷμα ἡμετέρου.}$

Thence those who are near relations, are called in *Sophocles*,  $\text{οἱ πατρὸς αἵμα}$ ; Thence the name of *Consanguinity* for nearness of relation; and *Virgil* useth *sanguis* in the same sense,

*Trojano à sanguine duci.*

So that the *Apostles* meaning is, that however men now are so dispersed in their habitations, and differ so much in language and customs from each other, yet they all were originally of the same *stock*, and did derive their succession from that first *man* whom *God* created. Neither can it be conceived  
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on what account *Adam* in the *Scripture* is called the *first man*, 1 Cor. 15. 45, and that *he was made a living soul, and of the earth, earthly*; 47. unless it were to denote that he was absolutely the *first* of his kind, and so was to be the standard and measure of all that follows. And when our *Saviour* would reduce all things to the *beginning*, he instanceth in those words which were pronounced after *Eve* was formed, *But from the beginning of the Creation God made them male and female; For this cause shall a man leave Father and Mother and cleave unto his wife.* Now nothing can be more plain and easie than from hence to argue thus; those of whom those words were spoken, were the first male and female which were made in the *beginning* of the *Creation*; but it is evident these words were spoken of *Adam* and *Eve*: *And Adam said, this is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh: therefore shall a man leave his Father and his Mother and shall cleave unto his wife.* If the *Scriptures* then of the *New Testament* be true, it is most plain and evident that all mankind is descended from *Adam*; and no less conspicuous is it from the *history* of the *Creation* as delivered by *Moses*. Mark 10. 6, 7. Gen. 2. 23, 24.

For how necessary had it been for *Moses*, when he was giving an account of the *Origin* of things to have discovered by whom the *World* was first planted, if there had been any such *plantation* before *Adam*; but to say that all the design of *Moses* was only to give an account of the *Origin* and *History* of the *Jewish Nation*, and that *Adam* was only the first of that stock, is manifestly ridiculous, it being so clear, that not only from *Adam* and *Noah*, but from *Sem*, *Abraham*, and *Isaac*, came other Nations besides that of *Jews*. And by the same reason that it is said, that *Moses* only speaks of the *Origin* of the *Jewish Nation* in the *history* of *Adam*, it may as well be said that *Moses* speaks only of the making of *Canaan*, and that part of the *Heavens* which was over it, when he describes the *Creation* of the *World* in the six days work. For why may not the *Earth* in the second verse of *Genesis* be as well understood of the *Land* of *Judæa*, and the light and production of *Animals* and *Vegetables* referr only to that, as to understand it so in reference to the *Flood*, and in many other passages relating to those eldest times? But the *Authour* of that *Hypothesis* answers, *That the first Chapter of Genesis may relate to*

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the true Origin of the world, and the first peopling of it, but in the second Moses begins to give an account of the first man and woman of the Jewish Nation. Very probable ! but if this be not a putting asunder those which God hath joyned together, nothing is. For doth not Moses plainly at first give an account of the formation of things, in the first six days, and of his rest on the seventh ? but how could he be said to have rested then from the works of Creation, if after this followed the formation of Adam and Eve in the second Chapter ? Besides if the forming of man, mentioned, Gen. 2. 7. be distinct from that mentioned, Gen. 1. 27. then by all parity of reason, תולדות השמים והארץ the Generations of Heaven and Earth mentioned, Gen. 2. 4. must be distinct from the Creation of the Heaven and Earth, mentioned, Gen. 1. 1. And so if there were another Creation of Heaven and Earth belonging to the Jews in Gen. 2. we may likewise believe that there was a new Creation of man and woman in that Chapter distinct from that mentioned in the former. Again further, if there had been any such persons in the world before Adam, no doubt Adam himself was ignorant of them ; or else it had been a false and ridiculous account which he gives of the name of his Wife הוה, because she was אם כל חי the Mother of all living. Not of all living things, for that had been a more proper description of a Ceres, or Magna Mater, or Diana multimammia, of our Grand-mother the Earth ; but certainly it extends to all of the kind, that all living creatures that are of humane nature came from her. So the Chaldee Paraphrast understands it, she was called Hava, because she was אםא דכל בני אנושא the Mother of all the Sons of men. And so the Arabick version, quia ipsa fuit mater omnis viventis rationalis. To which purpose our Learned Selden cites the version of the Mauritanian Jews, and the Persick of Tawafius.

Selden de jure  
natur. & gent.

l. 1. c. 5. p. 65.

But what-ever the credit or authority of these Versions be, this is most certain, that Adam had no reason at all to have given this name to his wife, as being the Mother of all living, if there had been any of mankind existing in the world from other mothers, which had been long before Eve was formed. So that we find it plain and clear, that if the report given of things in Scripture be true, the hypothesis of Præ-Adamites is undoubtedly false. And certainly who-ever seriously considers the

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the frequent reflexions on the Authority of the *Scriptures* which were cast by the *Authour* of that *Fiction*, and his endeavouring on all occasions to *derogate* from the *miracles* recorded in it, may easily suspect the design of that *Authour* was not to gain any credit to his opinion from those arguments from *Scripture*, which he makes shew of (which are pitifully weak and ridiculous,) but having by the help of such arguments made his opinion more plausible, his hope was that his opinion would in time undermine the *Scriptures* themselves. When he had made it appear that the account given in the *Scriptures* of the plantation of the World was unsatisfactory, since there were men before *Adam*, which the *Scriptures* to please the *Jewish Nation*, take no notice of. So that after he had attempted to *prostitute* the *Scriptures* to his opinion, his next work had been to have turned them out of doors, as not of credit to be relied on by any when they were so common to every opinion. But how impious, absurd and rude that attempt was upon the *sacred* and *inviolable authority* of the *Scriptures*, hath been so fully discovered by his very many not unlearned adversaries, that it might seem needless so much as to have taken notice of so weakly grounded, and infirmly proved an opinion, had it not thus far lain in my way in order to the clearing the true *Origin* of *Nations* according to the *Scriptures*. The main *foundations* of which fabulous opinion lying chiefly in the pretended *antiquities* of the *Chaldeans*, *Egyptians*, and others, have been fully taken away in our first book, where our whole design was to manifest the want of *credibility* in those accounts of *ancient times*, which are delivered by *Heathen Nations* in opposition to the *Scriptures*. There is nothing at all in *Scripture* from the *Creation* of *Adam* to the *Flood* which seems to give any countenance to that *figment*, but only what may be easily resolved from the *consideration* of the great *conciseness* of the *Mosaick History*, in reporting that long interval of time which was between the fall of *Adam*, and the *Flood*; By means of which conciseness such things are reported as speedily done, because immediately succeeding in the story, which asked a very considerable time before they could be effected; and besides all things which were done before the *Flood*, being all quite obliterated by it, and all the numerous posterity of *Adam* being then destroyed (only *Noah* and his Family

Family excepted,) to what purpose had it been any further to have reported the *passages* before the *Flood*, otherwise than thereby to let us understand the *certainty* of the *succession* of persons from *Adam*, and such *actions* in those times which might be remarkable *discoveries* of *God's providence* and *Man's wickedness* in it, which being most apparent at first in *Cain* and his posterity, did by degrees so spread its self over the face of the then inhabited *World*, that the just *God* was thereby provoked to send a *Deluge* among them to sweep away the present inhabitants to make room for another *Generation* to succeed them.

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This therefore we now come to consider, viz. *The History of the Flood*, and the *certainty of the propagation of the world* from the posterity of *Noah* after the *Flood*. I begin with the *History of the Flood* its self, as to which, two things will be sufficient to demonstrate the truth of it. 1. *If there be nothing in it repugnant to reason.* 2. *If we have sufficient evidence of the truth of it, from such who have not yet believed the Scriptures.* There are only two things which seem questionable to reason concerning the *Flood*; the first, is, *concerning the possibility of the Flood its self*; the other is, *concerning the capacity of the Ark for preserving all kinds of Animals.* The only ground of questioning the *possibility* of such a *Flood*, as that is related in *Scripture*, hath been from hence, that some have supposed it impossible that all the *water* which is contained in the *air*, supposing it to fall down, should raise the *surface of water* upon the earth a *foot and a half in height*; so that either new *waters* must be created to overflow the earth, or else there must be supposed a *rarefaction* of the *Water* contained in the *Sea* and all *Rivers*, so that it must take up at least fifteen times the *space* that now it doth; but then they say, if the *Water* had been thus *rarified*, it could neither have destroyed *man* nor *beast*, neither could *Noah's Ark* have been born up by it any more than by *liquid Air*. To this therefore, I answer,

First, I cannot see any urgent necessity from the *Scripture* to assert, that the *Flood* did spread its self over all the *surface of the earth*. That all *mankind* (those in the *Ark* excepted) were destroyed by it, is most certain according to the *Scriptures*. When the occasion of the *Flood* is thus expressed,

Gen. 6. 5, 7. *And God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth,*



earth, <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>and</sup> that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart <sup>And the Lord said, I will destroy man</sup> whom I have created, <sup>from the face of the earth.</sup> It could not be then any particular deluge of so small a Country as *Palestine*, which is here expressed, as some have ridiculously imagined; for we find an *universal corruption* in the earth mentioned as the cause; an *universal* threatening upon all men for this cause; and afterwards an *universal destruction* expressed, as the effects of this Flood. *And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, and every man. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground both man and cat-tel, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the Heaven, and they were destroyed from the Earth, and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the Ark.* So then it is evident that the Flood was *universal* as to mankind, but from thence follows no necessity at all of asserting the universality of it as to the *Globe* of the Earth, unless it be sufficiently proved that the whole Earth was peopled before the Flood: which I despair of ever seeing proved. And what reason can there be to extend the Flood beyond the occasion of it, which was the corruption of mankind? And it seems very strange that in so short an *Interval*, in comparison as that was from *Adam* to the Flood, according to the ordinary computation, viz. 1656 years, and not much above two thousand, according to the largest, the world should then be fully peopled, when in so much longer a *space of time* since the Flood to this day, the Earth is capable of receiving far more *Inhabitants*, than now it hath. The only probability then left for asserting the *universality* of the Flood, as to the *Globe* of the Earth, is from the destruction of all *living creatures* together with man; now though men might not have spread themselves over the whole surface of the Earth, yet *beasts* and *creeping things* might, which were all destroyed with the Flood: For it is said, *That all flesh died that moved upon the Earth, both of fowl and of cat-tel, and of beast, and of every creeping thing, that creepeth upon the Earth, and every man.* To what end should there be not only a note of universality added, but such a particular enumeration of the several kinds of *beasts*, *creeping things*, and *fowls*, if they were not all destroyed? To this I answer. I grant as far as the Flood extended, all these were destroyed; but

but I see no reason to extend the *destruction* of these beyond that *compass* and *space* of *Earth* where men inhabit, and could the punishment upon ~~the Judges~~ <sup>was occasioned by</sup>, and could not but be *concomitant* with the *destruction* of mankind, but (the occasion of the *deluge* being the *sin* of man, who was punished in the *beasts* that were destroyed for his sake, as well as in himself) where the *occasion* was not, as where there were *animals*, and no men, there seems no necessity of extending the *Flood* thither. But to what end then it will be replied, Did God command Noah, with so much care to take of all kinds of *beasts* and *birds*, and *creeping things* into the *Ark* with him, if all these *living creatures* were not destroyed by the *Flood*? I answer, because all those things were destroyed where-ever the *Flood* was; suppose then the whole *Continent* of *Asia* was peopled before the *Flood*, which is as much as we may in reason suppose, I say, all the *living creatures* in that *Continent* were all destroyed; or if we may suppose it to have extended over our whole *Continent* of the *anciently known World*; what reason would there be that in the opposite part of the *Globe*, viz. *America*, which we suppose to be unpeopled then, all the *living creatures* should there be destroyed, because men had sinned in this? And would there not on this supposition have been a sufficient reason to preserve *living creatures* in the *Ark* for *future propagation*, when all other *living creatures* extant had been in such remote places as would not have been *accessible* by them in many *generations*, and those *beasts* growing wild for want of *Inhabitants*, would not have proved presently serviceable for the *use* of men after the *Flood*? Which was certainly the main thing looked at in the preservation of them in the *Ark*, that men might have all of them ready for their *use* presently after the *Flood*, which could not have been, had not the several *kinds* been preserved in the *Ark*, although we suppose them not destroyed in all parts of the *World*.

Sett. 4.

All this proceeds on supposition that *animals* were *propagated* much further in the *World* than men were, before the *Flood*. Which I confess seems very probable to me, on this account, because the production of *animals* is parallel in *Genesis* with that of *Fishes*, and both of them different from Man; For God saith, Let the *Waters* bring forth every moving creature that hath life; viz. *Fish*, and *Fowl*; and accordingly it is said,  
that

Gen. 1. 20, 21.



that the Waters brought forth abundantly every living creature after their kind, and every fowl after his kind. Accordingly in the production of beasts, we read, *Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind, and it was so :* But in the production of Man, it is said, *Let us make Man in our own likeness.* Ver. 24. Ver. 26.

From hence I observe this difference between the production of animals, and of man, that in the one God gave a prolifick power to the Earth and Waters for production of the several living creatures which came from them ; so that the seminal principles of them were contained in the matter out of which they were produced, which was otherwise in man, who was made by a peculiar hand of the great Creator himself, who thence is said to have formed man of the dust of the ground. Now Gen. 2. 6.

therefore although there were but one Male and Female of mankind at first, which had a special formation by God himself ; yet there is no reason we should conceive it to be so as to the production of other living creatures, whether Fish, or Fowl, or Beasts ; but the prolifick vertue being by God's power given to that material principle out of which they were formed, it may very well be supposed that many of the same kind were at first produced. For it seems very strange to imagine that in the whole Ocean there should be only two of a kind produced ; but Fish and Fowl both arising from the water, we may have just reason to think, that the waters being separated before this prolifick vertue was communicated to the whole mass of Waters, might in the several parts of the Globe of the Earth, bring forth both Fish and Fowl after their kinds. The same I say of the production of Animals in the sixth day's work, which are ranked into three sorts, Cattle, Creeping-things, and Beasts of the Earth after their kinds ; Now God saying, *Let the Earth bring forth her living creatures,* ( and that after the waters had divided some parts of the Earth from other, so that there could be no passage for the Cattle, Creeping-things, and Beasts out of one part into another, without the help of Man,) it seems very probable that at least those parts of the Earth which were thus divided from each other, did bring forth these several living creatures after their kinds, which did after propagate in those parts without being brought thither by the help of man. If now this supposition be embraced, by it

we presently clear our selves of many *difficulties* concerning the *propagation* of *Animals* in the World, and their conversation in the *Ark*, which many have been so much to seek for satisfaction in. As how the unknown kind of *Serpents* in *Brazil*, the *slow-bellied* creature of the *Indies*, and all those strange *species* of *animals* seen in the *West-Indies* should either come into the *Ark* of *Noah*, or be conveyed out of it into those *Countries* which are divided from that *Continent* where the *Flood* was by so vast an *Ocean* on the one side, and at least so large a tract of *Land* on the other (supposing any passage out of one *Continent* into another, which yet hath not been discovered.) Besides, some kind of *Animals* cannot live out of that particular *Clime* wherein they are; and there are many sorts of *animals* discovered in *America*, and the adjoining *Islands*, which have left no *remainders* of *themselves* in these parts of the World. And it seems very strange that these should propagate into those remote parts of the *world* from the *place* of the *Flood*, and leave none at all of their number behind them in those parts from whence they were propagated. These things at least make that opinion very probable which extends the *production* of *Animals* beyond that of *mankind* in the old World, and that the *Flood* though it destroyed all *mankind*, and every *living creature* within that compass wherein *mankind* inhabited, yet might not extend it self to those parts, and the *Animals* therein, in which men had never inhabited. And by this means we need not make so many *miracles* as some are fain to do about the *Flood*; and all those *difficulties* concerning the *propagation* of *animals* do of themselves vanish and fall to the ground. This is the first *way* of resolving the *difficulty* concerning the *possibility* of the *Flood*, by asserting it not to have been over the whole *Globe* of the *Earth*, but only over those *parts* where *mankind* inhabited.

*Seet. 5.* Secondly, Suppose the *Flood* to have been over the whole *Globe* of the *Earth*, yet there might have been *water* enough to have overwhelmed it to the *height* mentioned in *Scripture*. For which we are to consider that many causes concurred to the making of this *Deluge*; first, the *Air* was *condensed* into *Clouds*, and those fell down with continued force and violence, not breaking into drops, but all in a body (which Sir *Walter*

*Hist. of the*  
*World*, 1. B. c. 7.  
*Seet. 6.*

*Raleigh* parallels with the *spouts* of the *West-Indies*) which  
are



are thence called the *Cataracts* or *Flood-gates* of Heaven, God loosening (as he expresseth it) the power retentive which was in the *Clouds*, and so the waters must needs fall in abundance, according to the expression of *Job*, *Behold he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up, also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth.* Now, I say, although these waters falling down with so much fury and violence, as well as in so great abundance, might quickly destroy all *living creatures*; yet this was not all; for God who held in the Ocean within its bounds, whereby he saith to it, *Thus far it shall go, and no further*, might then give it commission to execute his justice upon the sinfull World: and to all this, we have another cause of the *Deluge*, which was, *That the Fountains of the great Deep were broken up.* By which *Vatablus*, most probably understands, *Immensam illam & profundam aquarum copiam quæ est subter terram*: That vast body of Waters which lies in the bowels of the Earth; Now when all these *Fountains* were broken up, and the Waters within the Earth rush out with violence and impetuosity upon it, it must needs cause an *inundation* so great as that is mentioned in the *Scripture*. For as that judicious Historian Sir *W. Rawleigh* observes, Let us consider that the Earth had above 21000 Miles compass, the *Diameter* of the Earth according to that Circle 7000 Miles, and then from the *Superficies* to the Center 3500 Miles; take then the highest Mountain of the World, *Caucasus, Taurus, Teneriff*, or any other, and I do not find, saith he, that the highest exceeds thirty Miles in *height*: It is not then impossible, answering reason with reason, that all those Waters mixed within the Earth, 3500 Miles deep, should be able to cover the space of 30 Miles in *height*, which 30 Miles upright being found in the depths of the Earth 116 times; for the *Fountains* of the great Deep were broken, and the Waters drawn out of the bowels of the Earth. But then withall, saith he, if we consider the proportion which the Earth bears to the *Air* about it, we may easily understand the possibility of the *Flood*, without any new creation of waters; for supposing so much Air to be condensed, and so turned into Water which doth encompass the Earth, it will not seem strange to men of judgment, yea but of ordinary understanding, that the Earth (God so pleasing) was covered over with Waters, without any new Creation.

*Job* 12. 15.

*Gen.* 7. 11.

*Ibid.*

But this will yet appear more probable if the *height* of the *highest Mountains* doth bear no greater a proportion to the *Diameter* of the *Earth*, than of the 1670 *part* to the *whole*, supposing the *Diameter* of the *Earth* to be 8355 *Miles*, as *P. Gassendus* computes both. And it is more than probable, that men have been exceedingly mistaken, as to the *height* of *Mountains*, which comes so far short of what *Sir Walter Raleigh* allows to them, that the highest *Mountain* in the *World* will not be found to be five direct *Miles* in *height* taking the *altitude* of them from the *plain* they stand upon. *Olympus* whose *height* is so extolled by the *Poets* and ancient *Greeks*, that it is said to exceed the *Clouds*; yet *Plutarch* tells us that *Xenagoras* measured it and found it not to exceed a *mile* and a half *perpendicular* and about 70 *Paces*. Much about the same *height* *Pliny* saith that *Dicaearchus* found the *Mountain Pelion* to be. The *Mount Athos* is supposed of extraordinary *height*, because it casts its shadow into the *Isle* of *Lemnos*, which according to *Pliny* was 87 *Miles*, yet *Gassendus* allows it but two *Miles* in *height*; but *Isaac Vossius* in a learned discourse concerning the *height* of *Mountains* in his notes on *Pomponius Melam*, doth not allow above 10 or 11 *Furlongs* at most to the *height* of *Mount Athos*. *Caucasus* by *Ricciolus* is said to be 51 *Miles* in *height*: *Gassendus* allowing it to be higher than *Athos* or *Olympus*, yet conceives it not above three or four *Miles* at most; but *Vossius* will not yield it above two *Miles* *perpendicular*, for which he gives this very good reason; *Polybius* affirms, there is no *Mountain* in *Greece* which may not be ascended in a day's time, and makes the highest *Mountain* there not to exceed ten *Furlongs*; which, saith *Vossius*, it is scarce possible for any one to reach unless he be a *Mountainer* born; any other will scarce be able to ascend above six *Furlongs perpendicular*; for in the ascent of a *Mountain* every *pace* doth reach but to an hand-breadth, *perpendicular*; but if we do allow eight *Furlongs* to a day's ascent, yet thereby it will appear that the highest *Mountains* in the *World* are not above twenty-four *Furlongs* in *height*, since they may be ascended in three days time: and it is affirmed of the top of *Mount Caucasus*, that it may be ascended in less than the compass of three days, and therefore cannot be much above two *Miles* in *height*. Which may be the easier believed of any other *Mountain*, when that which is

reputed

Tom. 2. op.  
Phys. sect. 3. l. 1.

Plut. in Aemilian.  
Plin. l. 2. c. 65.

Voss. in Pomp. Melam, l. 5. c. 2.  
p. 115, &c.



reputed the *highest* of the World, viz. the Pike of Teneriff, which the Inhabitants call *Pica de Terraria*, may be ascended in that compass of time, viz. *three days*: for in the months of *July* and *August* (which are the only months in which men can ascend it, because all other times of the year Snow lies upon it, although neither in the *Isle* of Teneriff nor any other of the *Canary-Islands* there be Snow ever seen) the Inhabitants then ascend to the top of it in *three days* time, which top of it is not *Pyramidal* but *plain*, from whence they gather some *sulphureous stones*, which are carried in great quantities into *Spain*. So that according to the proportion of *eight Furlongs* to a days journey, this Pike of Teneriff will not exceed the height of a *German Mile perpendicular*, as *Varenius* confesseth, than which he thinks likewise, that no Mountain in the World is higher. For what *Pliny* speaks of the *Alps* being *fifty Miles* in height, must be understood not *perpendicular*, but in regard of the obliquity of the ascent of it; so that he might account so much from the foot of the *Alps* to the top of them, and yet the *Alps* in a *perpendicular* line not come near the height of a *German Mile*. If then the highest Mountains do not exceed much above *three Miles* in height, (for the *Spaniards* themselves affirm, that those lofty Mountains of *Peru*, in comparison of which, they say, the *Alps* are but like *Cottages*, may be ascended in *four days* compass,) we see from hence then far greater probability, how the *Waters* in the time of the general Flood might over-top the highest Mountains.

*V. Varenium  
Geogr. General.  
l. 1. c. 10. prop.  
3.*

Especially if it be made evident that there is so great an *Abyss* of *subterraneous waters*, that the breaking open of the *Fountains* of it may so much encrease the inundation arising from the *Clouds*, and from the breaking in of the *Ocean* upon the main *Land*. And that there is such a *mass* of *Waters* in the body of the Earth, is evident from the *Origin* of *Fountains*; for the opinion of *Aristotle* imputing them to the *condensation* of *Air* in the *caverns* of the *Earth*, and that of other *Philosophers* ascribing them to the fall of *rain-water* received into such *Cisterns* in the Earth which are capable of receiving it, are both equally *unsatisfactory*, unless we suppose a *mass* of *waters* in the bowels of the Earth, which may be as the common stock to supply those *Fountains* with. For it is very hard, conceiving how mere *Air* should be so far *condensed*, as to cause

Seet. 6.

not

not only such a number of *Fountains*, but so great a quantity of water as runs into the Sea by those *Rivers* which come from them, (as the River *Volga* is supposed to empty so much water in a years time into the *Caspian Sea*, as might suffice to cover the whole *Earth*,) by which likewise it is most evident that there must be some subterranean *passages* in the *Sea*, or else of necessity, by that *abundance* of water which continually runs into it from the *Rivers*, it would *over-flow* and drown the World. And from this multitude of *waters* which comes from *Fountains*, it is likewise evident, that the *Origin* of *Fountains* cannot be merely from such water which falls from the *Clouds*, which would never suffice to maintain so full and uninterrupted a *stream* as many *Fountains* have: Especially if that be true which some assert, that *rain-water* doth never *moisten* the *Earth* above *ten foot deep*, for of far greater *profundity* many *Fountains* are. And besides, the *rain-water* runs most upon the *surface* of the *Earth*, and so doth rather swell the *Rivers* which thereby run with greater force in their passage to the *Ocean*, and doth not lodge it self presently in the *Earth*, especially if it descends in a greater *quantity*, which alone is able to fill such *Cisterns* supposed to be in the *Earth*, especially in *Mountains*, which may keep a stream continually running. Although therefore we may acknowledge that the fall of *rain* may much conduce to the *over-flowing* and *continuance* of *Fountains*, as is evident by the greater force of *Springs* after continued *rains*, and by the decay of many of them in *hot* and *dry* weather, (which yet I had rather impute to the *Sun's* exhaling by his continued heat those moist *vapours* in the *Earth*, which should continually supply the *Springs*, than merely to the want of *Rain*,) and by the rise of most great *Rivers* from such *Fountains* which came from the *foot* of *Mountains*; where the ground is supposed to be of so hard and consistent a substance, as stone, or chalk, or something of like nature, which might help to the conservation of water there, from whence it after ran in streams to the *Ocean*, (which was the great argument of the famous *Peireskii* for this opinion,) although I say, these things may argue thus far, that *rain-water* doth much conduce to the preservation of *Springs*, yet it cannot give a sufficient account of the *Origin* of them: Which with the greatest reason and probability is imputed to those *subterranean*



*raaneous waters* which pass up and down through the bowels of the Earth. Some have fancied the Earth to be as one *great Animal*, whose *subterraneous passages* were like *veins* in the body, which received *water* out of the *Sea*, as the veins do *blood* out of the *Liver*; and that there are some kind of hot *vapours* in the Earth which supply the place of *vital spirits*, which are diffused up and down the body through the *arteries*. And that as in an *animal*, there are some parts which upon the least *prick* do send forth *blood*, and others are more *callous* where the *incision* must be deeper before any blood appears; so it is in the Earth, when it is opened in a *right vein* we find presently a *Spring* of *water*; but if we chance to hit on a wrong place, we go deep and may find none; not that *Water* is wanting, but we have not hit on the *veins* through which it runs. And thence as the *blood* with equal freedom and velocity ascends into the *head* as it runs into the *legs*, because it is equally *dispersed* into all the parts from the *center* of it; so in the body of the Earth it is as natural for the *water* to ascend into the *tops* of *Mountains*, as it is to fall down into the center of the Earth. And that it is no more wonder to see *Springs* issue out of *Mountains*, than it is to see a man bleed in the *veins* of his *fore-head* when he is let blood there. So in all places of the Earth the parts of it are not disposed for *apertion*; for some of them are so hard and *compact*, that there seems to be no passage through them, (which is the most probable reason, why there is no rain neither in those places, because there is no such exudation of those moist *vapours* through the *surface* of the *Earth*, which may yield matter for *rain*, as it is in many of the sandy places of *Africa*; but usually mountainous Countries have more large, and as it were *Temple-veins* through which the moist *vapours* have a free and open passage, and thence there are not only more frequent *Springs* there, but *Clouds* and *Rains* too.) Now if this account of the *Origin* of *Springs* in the Earth be as rational as it is ingenious and handsome, (and there is not much can be said against it, but only that then all *Fountains* should be *salt* as the water is from whence they come,) then we easily understand how the *Earth* might be *over-flowed* in the universal *Deluge*; for then the *Fountains* of the *deep* were broken up, or there was an *universal opening* of the *veins* of the Earth, whereby  
all

all the water contained in them would presently run upon the surface of the Earth, and must needs according to its proportion advance its self to a considerable height. But because the salving the difference of the *water* in *Springs* from what it is in the *Sea* is so considerable a *Phænomenon* in our present case, I therefore rather take this following as the most *rational* account of the *Origin* of *Fountains*, viz. That there are great *cavities* in the *Earth*, which are capable of receiving a considerable quantity of *water*, which continually runs into them from the *Sea*, (which as it continually receives fresh supplies from the *Rivers* which empty themselves into it, so it dispatcheth away a like quantity thorow those *spongy* parts of the *Earth* under the *Ocean*, which are most apt to suck in and convey away the surplusage of water,) so that by this means the *Sea* never swells by the water conveyed into it by the *Rivers*, there being as continual a *circulation* in the *body* of the *Earth* of the *water* which passeth out of the *Ocean* into the *subterraneous Caverns*, and from thence to the *Mountains*, and thence into the *Sea* again; as there is a *circulation* of *blood* in man's body from the *heart* by the *arteries* into the *exteriour parts*, and returning back again by the *veins* into the *heart*. According to which we may imagine such a place in the heart of the *Earth* like *Plato's Baratrum*,

Τῆλε μάλ' ἢ χυ βάθυστον ὑπὸ χθονός ἐστι βέρετρον.

As *Plato* in his *Phædrus* describes it out of *Homer*, a long and deep *subterraneous cavity*, εἰς δὲ τῶτο τὸ χάσμα συρρέουσι τε πάντες οἱ ποταμοὶ, καὶ ἐκ τούτου πάλιν πάντες ἐκρέουσι. Into which cavity all the *Rivers* at last flow, and from which they again disperse themselves abroad. Now this *Cavity* of the *Earth* thus fill'd with water, supplies the place of the *heart* in the *body* of the *Earth*, from which all those several *aquæducts* which are in the *Earth* have their continual supply; but that which makes those passages of water which we call *Springs* and *Fountains* properly, I suppose, is thus generated; from those *Cavities* fill'd with water in the *Earth* by reason of the hot streams which are in the *body* of the *Earth*, there are continually rising some vapours or little particles of water, which are dis-joyned from each other by the heat, by reason of which they attain a greater



greater *celerity* of *motion*, and so pass through the inner *pores* of the *Earth* till they come near the *superficies* of it. Which when they have approached to, they are beat back again by the *cold*, which environs the *surface* of the *Earth*, or at least are so arrested by the *cold* and condensed by it, that they lose the form of *vapours*, and become perfect *water* again. Which *water* being now more *gross*, than while it was a mere *vapour*, cannot descend again through the same *pores* through which it ascended before, because these are not now capable of receiving it: And therefore it seeks out some *wider passages* near the *surface* of the *Earth*, by which means it moves in an *oblique manner*, and is ready to embrace any other *vapours* which are *arrested* in the same manner; now when these are grown to a considerable *body* in the *surface* of a *Mountain*, or a *Plain*, and find a vent fit for them, there appears a proper *Fountain*, whose *streams* are still maintained by the same *condensation* of *vapours*, which when they are once come abroad, are in continual *motion* whereby *Rivers* are made, which are still finding a passage through the *declivity* of the *surface* of the *Earth*, whereby they may return to the *Ocean* again. Now according to this account, that grand *Phænomenon* of the *freshness* of *Fountain-water*, when the water of the *Sea* is salt, whence it originally comes, is sufficiently resolved. For mere *transcolation* may by degrees take away that which the *Chymists* call the *fixed salt*; and for the *Volatile salt* of it (which being a more spiritous thing, is not removable by *distillation*, and so neither can it be by *transcolation*;) yet such an *evaporation* as that mentioned, may serve to do it, because it is evident that *fresh water* will fall from the *clouds* which hath risen from those *vapours* which have come out of the *Sea*; and besides these *vapours* or small *particles* of water in their passage thorough the *Earth* (especially when they come near the *surface* of it) do *incorporate* with other *sweet vapours*, as those which come from *rain* and others, by which means they insensibly lose their former *acidity* and *sharpness*. But those *Fountains* which do retain their former *saltness*, as there are many such in the world, may very probably be supposed not to have come from those *vapours* condensed, but to be a kind of a breaking of *vein* in which the *salt* water was conveyed up and down the *body* of the *Earth*. Now then, considering that *mass* of wa-

*ters* and multitude of *vapours* arising thence which are in the Earth, how easie is it for us to understand what the *breaking open* the *Fountains* of the *deep* means in *Scripture*, and how by that means together with the *falling down* of the *Cataracts* of the *Clouds*, and the letting *loose* of the *Ocean*, the whole Earth might be over-spread with an universal deluge? The possibility of which was the thing to be shewed.

*Seft.* 7. The next thing we come to concerning the *Flood*, is, the *capacity* of the *Ark* for receiving the several *animals* which were to propagate the world afterwards. Concerning which, two things are necessary to be understood, what the measure of the *Ark* was, and what the *number* of *animals* contained in it. The measure of the *Ark* must be determined by the *proportion* of the *cubit*, which there is no reason at all to suppose either with *Origen* and others to have been the *Geometrical cubit*, which contains six ordinary cubits or nine feet, both because we find no mention at all of any such *cubit* in *Scripture*, and because the *Fabrick* of the *Ark* would have been of too vast a proportion. Neither yet is it probable, which *Sir W. Raleigh* supposeth, that this *cubit* must be of a proportion as much exceeding ours, as the *stature* of a *Gyant* doth ours, both because there is no certain *evidence*, either from *Scripture* or *Reason*, that the *proportion* of men then did generally exceed what is now; and besides, this tends not in the least to make the thing more plain. For according to that proportion, we must then have imagined *beasts* to have been as well as men; for the *horse* must have been *proportionably* as great to have been *serviceable* to men of that stature, and so the *Animals* would have taken up as much more room in the *Ark* as the *cubit* is supposed to be bigger. I suppose then that *Moses* speaks of the *cubit* most in use in his own time (for he writ so that they for whose use he writ, might be easily able to understand him,) now this *cubit* by the consent of writers contained a foot and a half in length; according to which proportion, supposing the *Ark* by *Moses* his description to have 300 cubits in length, 50 in breadth, and 30 in height, the whole capacity of the *Ark*, according to the computation of *Joh. Buteo* comes to 450000 solid cubits. For the length of 300 cubits being multiplied into the breadth of fifty cubits, and the product by the height of 30 cubits makes the whole *Concavity* 450000. Which *Mar-*  
*thens*

*Gen.* 6. 15.

*Buteo de arca*  
*Noe.* p. 93.



*thaus Hostus* reducing to the German measure, makes the longitude of the *Ark* to be 31 perches, 4 cubits, 5 fingers; the latitude 5 perches, 2 cubits and 11 fingers; the altitude 3 perches 1 cubit, 9 fingers; allowing to every perch 15 Roman feet. So that if we take a perch to contain 10 Hebrew cubits, which exceeds the former 11 fingers, the whole capacity of the *Ark* will be 450 cubical perches. And as he saith, *Hujusmodi sane ædificii amplitudo capacissima est, & quamlibet magno animantium numero haud dubie sufficere potuit*, the *Ark* of so large a capacity might easily contain the several kinds of animals in it. Which will be easily understood, if according to our former supposition, only the animals of the inhabited part of the world were preserved in the *Ark*; but admitting that all kinds of animals were there, there would be room enough for them, and for provision for them. For which Sir *W. Rawleigh* gives a prudent caution, that men ought not to take animals of a mixt nature, as *Mules* and *Hyæna's*, nor such as differ in size and shape from each other, as the *Cat* of *Europe*, and *Ownc* of *India*, into the several species of animals. Sir *W. Rawleigh* following *Buteo* reckons 89, or least any be omitted, a 100 several kinds of beasts, and undertakes to demonstrate from a triple proportion of all beasts to the *Ox*, *Wolf*, and *Sheep*, that there was sufficient capacity for them in the *Ark*. *Hostus* allows a 150 several kinds of animals, yet questions not the capacity of the *Ark*. But these things are so particularly made out by those learned Authors, especially by *Buteo*, that I shall rather refer the Reader for further satisfaction to the Authors themselves, than take the pains to transcribe them.

I come now therefore to the evidence of the truth and certainty of this universal deluge, of which we have most clear and concurring Testimonies of most ancient Nations of the world. For which purpose *Grotius* and others have at large produced the testimony of *Berosus* the Chaldean out of *Josephus*, concerning the Flood and the *Ark* in which *Noah* was preserved, of *Abidenus* out of *Cyril* and *Eusebius* concerning *Xisuthrus*, or *Noah's* sending out of the birds to see if the Flood were assuaged, and of *Alexander Polyhistor* concerning the preservation of animals in the *Ark*, of *Plutarch* concerning the sending out of the Dove, of *Lucian de Dea Syria* concerning the whole story, and so of *Molon* and *Nicolaus Damascenus*. Besides

*Hostus de fabrica Arce Noah. lib. 66.*

*V. Grot. Anim. in l. 1. de Verit. relig. Christ. Voss. Isago. Chronolog. disert. 4. c. 2. & 3. Bochar. Geogr. sacr. l. 1. c. 4. August. de Civit. Dei, l. 18. c. 12. & ibid. Lud. Viv.*

*Euseb. Chr. p. 5.*  
*ed. 2.*  
*Scaliger.*

*Jf. Voss. epist.*  
*ad Colvium, p.*  
*409.*  
*Martin. hist.*  
*Sinic. l. 1. p. 12.*  
*Joh. de Laet. de*  
*orig. gent. Ame-*  
*rican. l. 1. p. 115.*

*Gro. Annot. ad*  
*l. 1. de Verit.*  
*Ari. Montan.*  
*Phaleg.*  
*Junius in Gen.*  
*10. Bochart.*  
*Geogr. Sac. p. 1.*

it is manifested by others, how among the *Chaldeans* the memory of *Noah* was preserved under the Fable of *Oannes*, which had part of a *fish*, and part of a *man*, as is evident from the fragments of *Apollodorus*, *Abydenus*, and *Alexander Polyhistor*, preserved in *Eusebius* his *Greek Chronica*; among the *Chineses* under the name of *Puoncius*, who by them is said to have escaped alone with his Family out of the universal Deluge, saith *Isaac Vossius*, who supposeth *Pu* or *Pi* to be only a *Prefix* to the name, and so that *Puoncius*, is the same with *Ἰ Νῶ Χ*. *Martinus* tells us, *de diluvio multa est apud Sinicos Scriptores mentio*, that the ancient Writers of the *Sinick History* speak much of the *Flood*. *Johannes de Laet* tells out of *Lescharbo-*  
*tus* how constant the tradition of the *Flood* is among the *In-*  
*dians*, both in *New Frante*, *Peru*, and other parts. This being therefore so fully attested by the evident and apparent consent of so many *Writers* and *Historians*, which did not own the authority of the *Scriptures*, I shall suppose this sufficiently proved, and proceed to the main thing which concerns the *Origin of Nations*, which is, the certainty of the propagation of mankind from the posterity of *Noah*. Of which there is this strong and convincing evidence, that in all that account which the *Scripture* gives of the propagation of *Nations* from the *Sons of Noah*, there is some remainder in the *History* of that *Nation* to justify the reason of the imposition of the name from the names of the *Nations* themselves, which have preserved the original name of their Founder in their own, as the *Medes* from *Madai*; the *Thracians* from *Thiras*; the *Ionians* from *Javan*; the *Sidonians* from *Sidon*; the *Philistins* from *Polesthim*; the *Arceans*, *Aradians*, *Elymæans*, *Affyrians*, *Lydians*, from *Arki*, *Arad*, *Elam*, *Affur* and *Lud*, and many others produced by *Grotius*, *Montanus*, *Junius*, and especially *Bochartus*, who with admirable industry and learning hath cleared all this part of *sacred History*, which concerns the reason of the imposition of the names of the people which were propagated from the posterity of *Noah*, and given a full and satisfactory account of the several places where the posterity of *Noah* seated themselves after the deluge. Instead of that therefore, I shall consider the pretences which can be brought against it, which are chiefly these three. 1. That the *Chaldean Empire* seems to have greater antiquity than can be attributed to it by the Hi-

story



Rory of *Moses*. 2. That the most learned *Heathen Nations* pretend to be *self-originated*, and that they came not from any other *Country*. 3. That no certain account is given from whence *America* should be peopled.

1. The History of the *Assyrian Empire* seems inconsistent with the propagation of the world from the sons of *Noah*; for the reign of *Ninus* and *Semiramis* is placed by many *Chronologers* within the first Century after the Flood, which seems a manifest inconsistency with the propagation of mankind from the sons of *Noah*; for it seems utterly impossible that the foundations of so great an *Empire* should be laid in so small a compass of time by the posterity of three persons; and besides, *Ninus* and *Semiramis* were not the first who began the *Assyrian Empire*; for *Belus* not only reigned fifty five years before *Ninus*, but according to the *Chaldean Antiquities* from *Evechous*, who they say first reigned among them, are reckoned 495 years. But admit that the beginning of the *Assyrian Empire* be placed so low as *Petavius* and other *Chronologers* would have it, viz. in the year after the Flood, 153, yet the difficulty is only somewhat abated, but not removed; for it seems yet unconceivable that from three persons in 150 years, such multitudes should spring, as to make so large an *Empire* as that of *Ninus*, and that within an hundred years after the Flood there should be such vast multitudes for the building the *Tower of Babel* and dispersion up and down the world, so that according to the *Hebrew computation* in the compass of 300 years, viz. about *Abraham's* time, the world was so fully peopled, that we read of several *Kings* encountering one another, by which it is evident the world had been peopled some time before, or else there could not have been such potent *Kings* as some of them were at that time. This being the grand difficulty, to it I answer these things.

Seet. 9.

*Petav. de doct. temp. l. 9. c. 14. Tom. 2.*

1. There is no such certainty of the beginning of the *Assyrian Empire*, as for the sake of that, to question the truth of the propagation of the world by the sons of *Noah*. I have already largely manifested the want of credibility in the *Chronology* of the ancient *Chaldeans*, and that we have no certain grounds to rely upon in reference to it. Especially as to these seven first *Babylonian Kings*, which are cited out of *Africanus*, by *Eusebius*, and *Georgius Syncellus*, viz. *Evechous*, *Chomasbo-*  
lus,

*Ius, Porus, Nechubes, Abius, Oniballus, Chinzirus*, who are said to reign 225 years two months; and alike fabulous, I suppose, is the other *Dynasty* of six *Arabian Kings*, whose Empire is said to have stood 215 years to the time of *Belus*, who expelled the *Arabians*, and took the power to himself; And it is much more agreeable to reason to reject these two *Dynasties*, which have no record of them left in any *History* of the *Assyrian Empire*, but only in *Berosus*, whose authority in this case hath been discussed already, than to follow our late excellent *Primate* of *Armagh*, who punctually sets down the reign of the Kings of these two *Dynasties*, but cuts off at least eight *Ages* in the time of the *Assyrian Empire* from *Ninus* to *Sardanapalus*, which time he confines to 496 years, and placeth *Ninus* in the 2737 year of the World, according to the *Hebrew computation*, and so to live in the time of the *Judges*, and be contemporary with *Deborah*: Which he builds only on a place in *Herodotus*, which relates not to the time between *Ninias* and *Sardanapalus*, but to the time of the defection of the *Medes* from the *Assyrian Empire*, as *Isaac Vossius* hath already shewed. We cannot then find any certainty in the beginning of the *Assyrian Empire*, which may give us cause to question the propagation of the world from the posterity of *Noah*.

2. We have reason to think that there was a more than ordinary multiplication of the world from the sons of *Noah* after the Flood. For as God had before punished the world by destroying mankind in it by an extraordinary manner; so after the Flood, he doth in a particular manner bless *Noah* and his sons, and said unto them, *Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth*, which may well be thought to have then had an extraordinary effect. Several ways have been attempted by learned men to make appear, to what a vast number the posterity of *Noah* would increase in the space of two or three hundred years after the Flood. *Petavius* supposeth that the posterity of *Noah* might beget children at seventeen, and that each of *Noah's* sons might have eight children in the eighth year after the Flood, and that every one of these eight might beget eight more; by this means in onely one Family, as of *Japhet* in the year after the Flood 238, he makes a *Diagramme* consisting of almost an innumerable company of men. *Johannes Temporarius*, as our most learned *Primate* tells us, takes this way,

Usser. Annales  
Vet. Test. A.M.  
2737.

Castigat. adv.  
Hornium, c. 10.  
Gen. 9. 1.

Petav. de do-  
trin. templ. 9.  
c. 14.

Usser. Chronol.  
Lib. 1. c. 5.



way, that all of the *posterity* of *Noah*, when they attained twenty years of Age, had every year *twins*, on which supposition by *Arithmetical progression*, he undertakes to make it appear, that in the 102 year after the Flood, there would be of males and females 1554420, but taking away the one half, because of the groundless supposition of *twins*, yet then in that time there would be 388605 males besides females. Others suppose that each of the *sons* of *Noah* had *ten sons*, and by that proportion, in few Generations it would amount to many thousands within a Century. Others insist on the parallel between the multiplication of the children of *Israel* in *Egypt*; that if from 72 men in the space of 215 years there are procreated 600000, how many will be born of three men in the space of an hundred years? some have said above 23000, but with what success in their *Arithmetick*, I shall not determine. But whether all or any of these ways be sufficient, and satisfactory, we have yet cause to believe that there was a more than ordinary multiplication in the posterity of *Noah* after the Flood.

*Hern. defens.  
dissert. de arar.  
mundi, c. 26.*

3. If we embrace the account of those Copies, which the *Septuagint* followed in their version, all this difficulty is then ceased. For that account doth very much enlarge the times, and makes almost a thousand years between the Flood and *Abraham*, by which means there will be sufficient space given for the propagation of mankind, the building the Tower of *Babel*, the dispersion of Nations, the founding the *Assyrian* Empire, the plantation of *Egypt*, *China*, and other places, all which seem to have been in that time, and to concur with that computation, as well as *Josephus* doth, and the whole *Primitive Church* before *Hierom*, which certainly ought in no case to be disregarded.

The whole controversy concerning this part of the *Chronology* of the World comes at last to this, Whether it be more probable that the *Jews* who lived under the second Temple (who then were the Trustees to whom were committed the Oracles of God) whom the *LXX.* followed in their version, had the true reading, or the *Talmudick Jews* after their dispersion and banishment from their Country, when they were discarded by God himself from being his people, when he broke up house among them at the destruction of *Jerusalem* and the Temple.

*Temple.* But if the Reader desire further satisfaction concerning this *difference* of this *Chronology* of the *LXX.* from that of the present *Hebrew Copies*, he may consult the learned *dissertation* of the late learned Bishop of *Chester* upon the *LXX.* and the latter *discourses* of *Isaac Vossius* on this subject. Setting aside then the controversie between the present *Hebrew Copies* and the *LXX.* in point of *integrity* and *incorruption* which I meddle not with, I cannot but subscribe to the judgment of our judicious Historian, Sir *W. Rawleigh*: That if we look over all and do not hastily satisfy our understanding with the first things offered, and thereby being satiated do slothfully and drowsily sit down, we shall find it more agreeable rather to follow the reckoning of the *LXX.* who according to some editions make it above 1072 years between the Flood and Abraham's Birth, than to take away any part of those 352 years given. For if we advisedly consider the state and countenance of the World, such as it was in Abraham's time, yea before Abraham was born, we shall find that it were very ill done of us by following opinion without the guide of reason, to pare the time over deeply between Abraham and the Flood; because in cutting them too near the quick, the reputation of the whole story might perchance bleed thereby, were not the Testimony of the Scriptures supream, so as no objection can approach it; And that we did not follow withall this precept of St. Austin, that wheresoever any one place in the Scriptures may be conceived disagreeing to the whole, the same is by ignorance of mis-interpretation understood. For in Abraham's time all the then known parts of the world were peopled: all Regions and Countries had their Kings. Egypt had many magnificent Cities, and so had Palestine and all bordering Countries; yea all that part of the world besides as far as India: and those not built with sticks, but of hewn stones, and defended with Walls and Rampiers, which magnificence needed a parent of more antiquity than those other men have supposed. And therefore where the Scriptures are plainest and best agreeing with reason and nature, to what end should we labour to beget doubts and scruples, or draw all things into wonders and marvels? giving also strength thereby to common cavillers, and to those men's apish brains who only bend their wits to find impossibilities and monsters in the story of the world and mankind. Thus far that excellent Historian, whose words deserve consideration. Thus much for the first objection.

The

*Proleg. ad bibl.*  
*Polyglot. cap. 9.*  
*ff. 58, 63, &c.*  
*Isaac Vossius de*  
*LXX. Interp. &*  
*etat. mund.*

*History of the*  
*World. p. 1. b. 2.*  
*c. 1. sect. 7.*



The second is, *From the great pretence of several Nations that they were self-originated*, or came not from any other place. This was the *pretence* of the *Egyptians*, *Græcians*, ancient *Inhabitants of Italy*, and others. But how little reason we have to give credit to these *pretences*, will appear on these accounts.

1. *The impossibility* in nature that *mankind* should be produced in such a way as they imagined, which we have manifested already in our discourse of the *Origin of the Universe*. 2. That the *Nations* which pretended this, were never able to give sufficient *evidence* of it to any other *Nation* which demanded it; which is manifest by their want of any certain *records* of their ancient times, which is fully proved in our discourse in the first book of the want of credibility in *Heathen Histories*. 3. The only probable reason, which induced these *Nations* to make themselves *Aborigines*, was, because they supposed themselves to be the first *Inhabitants* of the *Countries* they lived in, which although I may allow to the *Egyptians*, and some other ancient *Nations*, yet I cannot do it to the *Hellens* or *Greeks*, who most vainly and arrogantly pretended to it. Which because it may give more light into the greatest *antiquities* of *Greece*, and some other *Nations* than hath been yet discovered or taken notice of, and because it may further tend to clear the *truth* of the *Scriptures*, as to the *Origin of Nations*, I shall more particularly enquire into the first *Plantation of Greece*. That it was first inhabited by some of *Noah's posterity*, is out of question with all those who prefer the most *ancient* and undoubted *records of Scripture* before the fabulous impostures of men's brains. But by whose immediate posterity the *Country of Greece* was first inhabited, is not yet so clear as it hath been generally presumed to be, by most who had rather follow the dictates of others, than spend time in such enquiries themselves: Which yet certainly are so far from being unworthy men's labour and industry, that nothing tends more clearly to advance the truth of *Scripture-history*, than the reconciling the *antiquities* of the *elder Nations* to what we find delivered of the plantation of the world from the *posterity of Noah*. As to this particular therefore of the first *plantation of Greece*, I shall first propound the opinion generally embraced among learned men, and then shew how far it is defective, and what other more true account may be given of it. It is evident from *Mo-*

ses, Gen. 10. 5. that the posterity of *Japhet* took possession of the *Isles* of the *Gentiles*, i. e. according to the *Hebrew Idiom*, not only such as are properly so called, but all those *Countries* which lay much upon the *Sea*, being at any distance from *Palæstine*, especially such as lay between the *Ocean* and *Mediterranean Sea*; and so both *Greece* and *Italy* come under the name of the *Isles* of the *Gentiles*. Among the sons of *Japhet* none is conceived so probable to have first peopled *Greece*, as he whose name was preserved among the *Inhabitants* of *Greece* with very little alteration. And so as the *Medes* from *Madai*, the *Assyrians* from *Assur*, the *Thracians* from *Thiras*, by the like *Analogy* the *Ionians* from *Javan*. From which it is observable, that although among the *Greeks* themselves, the *Ionians* were but as one *division* of that *people* which inhabited *Greece*, yet other Nations comprehended all under the name of *Ionians*. For which we have sufficient evidence from *Hesychius* and the

*Hesych. v. Ἰων-  
vi. Schol. in A-  
rist. Acharnens.*

*Stephanus de  
Urb. v. Ἰάω.*

*Scholias* on *Aristophanes*. Οἱ βάρεσσι τὸς Ἕλληνας Ἰάωνας λέγουσι, saith *Hesychius*; and more to this purpose the *Scholias* speaks. Πάντες τὰς Ἕλληνας Ἰάωνας οἱ βάρεσσι ἐκάλουν. For *Ἰάωνες* with the *Insertion* of the *Æolick Digamma* (which is always done when two Vowels meet) is *Ἰάωνες*, i. e. *Javones*, and *Stephanus Bybanti* tells us, that from *Ἰάων* comes *Ἰών*, and so *Homer*,

*Hom. I. 15.*

Ἐνθα ὃ Βοιωτοὶ καὶ Ἰάωνες ἐλοχτῶνες.

And *Dionysius Periegetes* reckons up *Ἰάων* as one of the *Rivers* of *Arcadia*,

*Dionys. u. 416.*

Ἐνθα μέλας ὄρε Κρηδὸς ἵνα ῥέει ὕψυ Ἰάων.

And which much confirms this opinion, the *Hebrew word* for *Javan* before the points added by the *Massorites*, viz. יָוָן bears a perfect *Analogy* with the *Greek* Ἰών; and יָוָן אֶרֶץ in *Scripture* is taken for *Greece*; and so *Dan. 8. 21*. *Alexander* is called יָוָן מֶלֶךְ, which the *LXX* render βασιλεὺς ἑλλήνων; and *Joel 3. 6*. You have sold my sons לְבָנַי בְּיָוָן to the sons of *Javan*, i. e. to the *Greeks*, as it is generally understood. But as *Javan* cannot be supposed to have come into these parts without his family, so it is generally presumed that there are no obscure foot-steps left of *Javan's* eldest son, *Elyha's* seating himself in *Greece*.



Greece. For from him *Josephus* derives the name *Ἀιωαῖς*, with whom the *Jerusalem Paraphrast* concurs. *Montanus* from thence derives the name *Elis*, from whence he supposeth the *Greeks* are called *Ἕλληνες*. *Bochartus* finds the clearest remainders of *Elisha* in *Elis*, the same with *Peloponnesus*, one part of which by *Homer* is called *Alisium*; thence *Ezek. 27. 7.* we read of the *purple and scarlet from the Isles of Elisha*, which makes it most probable to be that part of *Greece* which lay upon the *Ionian Sea*, where the best purple next to the *Tyrian* was found, as the learned *Bochartus* hath demonstrated from several Authors. This is now the substance of the generally-received account concerning the plantation of *Greece* from the posterity of *Noah*. Which if it be taken as to that people which did at length possess *Greece*, I see no reason to disapprove it; but if it be extended to the first plantation of *Greece*, I see as little to embrace it. That we may therefore judge more freely of the first Inhabitants of *Greece*, it is requisite we take an account of it from those who profess themselves most versed in their own *Antiquities*, who may in a matter of this nature which is attested by the common consent of the most learned *Antiquaries* of *Greece*, be the more credited, in that what they thus deliver, may be supposed to come from an ancient and undoubted *Tradition*.

*Ar. Montan. Phaleg. p. 24.*

*Bochart. Phaleg. l. 3. cap. 10.*

It is evident therefore, from the judgment of the most learned and judicious, even of the *Greeks* themselves, that *Greece* was first inhabited by a people by them called *Barbarous*, i.e. a people different from them in *language and manners*. So *Ephorus*, whom *Polybius* commends as the best Writer of the *Greek Antiquities*, saith that *Greece* was inhabited by a barbarous people before the *Hellens* came into it. And *Hecataeus Milesius* cited by *Strabo* concerning *Peloponnesus*, *ἐπὶ τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ὄντων αὐτῷ βαρβάρῳ*, which *Strabo* himself not only believes of *Peloponnesus*, but of 'all *Greece*, that it was κατοικία βαρβάρων τὸ πάλαιον, anciently a Plantation of *Barbarians*; the same is affirmed by *Aristotle* writing of the *Commonwealth* of the *Tegeates* concerning *Arcadia*, that before its being possessed by the *Arcadians*, it was inhabited by a barbarous people, who because they were expelled their Country before moon-rising, the *Arcadians* called themselves *πρὸςελάννοι*. Whether that be the ground of that vain-glorious boast (of which

*Seet. II.*

*Geogr. l. 7. V. Scholiast. in Apollonium, l. 4. v. 262.*

many reasons are given by learned men) I here dispute not ; it is sufficient that we find the *Grecians* were not the first who peopled any of these several places ; which is likewise attested by *Herodotus*, *Thucydides*, and others, whose testimonies we shall afterwards produce. It being then evident that the *Grecians* were not the first who inhabited that Country after from them called *Greece*, it follows to be inquired what this barbarous people was, and from whence they came. *Strabo* hath given us in a large Catalogue of the names of many of them, as the *Dryopes*, *Cancones*, *Leleges*, besides the *Aones*, *Tem-bices*, *Hyantes*, and many others ; but these seem not to have been that ancient people, but rather some latter Castings of the *Carians*, who, as *Thucydides* tells us, did very often make inroads upon the quarters of *Greece*. That people which had the largest spread, and greatest Antiquity, was the *Pelasgi* : thence *Peloponnesus* was anciently called Πελασγία. *Stephanus Byzantius* Πελοποννήσου τρεῖς ἰπωνιμίαι, Ἀσία, Πελασγία and Ἀφ-χός : and *Apollodorus* saith, that the *Peloponnesians* were anciently called *Pelasgi* ; and *Euripides*,

Πελασιώτας ὀνομασμένους τὸ πρῶτον  
Δαναέας,

And elsewhere,

Πρῶτον Πελασγοί, Δαναίδαι τὸ δεύτερον.

*Geogr. l. 9.*

These *Pelasgi* were not only in *Peloponnesus*, but in *Attica* too, as appears by *Strabo*, where he saith the Nation of the *Pelasgi* did inhabit, and by the *Athenians* ( that is after their mixture ) they were called πελασγοί, *Storks*, διὰ τὴν πλάνην for their frequent removals from place to place : and *Pausanias* mentions their being under the *Acronoli* at *Athens* : that they were in *Thessaly*, is evident from *Hesychius*. Πελασγοὶ οἱ Θεσσαλοὶ καὶ ἔτιον καὶ βαρβάρων, καὶ καὶ ἀπὸ Πελασγῶ τὰ Ἀργείων καὶ Ἰωνίων πολυπλήντων ; *Arcadia* seems to have the first or chief place of their residence, for the *Arcadians* who were accounted παλαιότατα ἔθνη καὶ ἑλλήνων, do vindicate the founder of this Nation, whom they call *Pelagus*, to themselves, and say he was ἀντίχρον among them, that is, the first who came into that



that Country; for all those, whose Original they knew not, they called them *Terra filios*, and *genminos terra*. *Pausanias In Arcad.* rightly conjectures that he was the first man among them, not as though he was alone, but because the Chief Ruler and Commander among them, and that brought them into the Country; but though they might fix themselves about *Arcadia*, it is evident they spread further; for *Menecrates Eleates* in *Strabo, l. 13.* his book of the founders of Cities, affirms that all the Sea-coasts of Greece called *Ionica*, beginning from *Mycale*, were first inhabited by the *Pelasgi*; nay we find them yet much higher up in *Epirus*, who were, as *Strabo* tells us, the first founders Lib. 7. of the famous Oracle of *Dodona*; for so *Ephorus* in him saith it was *πelasγῶν ἱδρυμα*, and that these were οἱ περὶ τὴν ἑλλάδα δυναστεύοντων ἀρχαιοτάτοι: thence the Poet,

Ζεὺ ἄνα Δωδωναίῃ Πελασγική.

And *Hesiod*,

Δωδώνῳ φηρόντε Πελασγῶν ἔδρανον ἦεν.

*Strabo* further makes it evident, that they were a barbarous people which lived about *Dodona*, from the description *Homer* gives of them,

ἀμφὶ δὲ Σελλοῖ

Σοὶ ναίεσ' ὑποφῆται, ἀνιπτόποδες χαμαιῖναι.

Which *Philostratus* best interprets when he saith they were *in Imag.* αὐτοχέδοι πνες καὶ ἔπο χαλασκειασυροὶ καὶ βίον, such that thought the Gods were best pleased with their simplicity and severity of life, and therein far different from the Grecian humour. *Suidas* in *Thessalicis* (cited likewise by *Strabo*) saith that the Temple of *Dodona* was removed from *Scotusa* in *Pelasgia* to *Thessala*, which is confirmed by *Herodotus* in *Enterpe*, where he largely speaks of the Temple and Oracle at *Dodona*. These *Pelasgi* confined not themselves to Greece neither, but were dispersed into the neighbour Islands, as *Chios*, *Creet*, *Lesbos*, *Lemnos*, *Imbro*, *Samos*, as will appear afterwards; and at last came into *Italy*, as is well known, and are thought to be the same with the

the *Tyrrhenians*, and by some conceived to be the first founders of *Rome*. We see what a large spread the *Pelasgi* had over *Greece*, which was divided after the *Hellens* began to appear, into τὸ πελασγικὸν and τὸ ἑλληνικὸν, as *Herodotus* witnesseth ; and so these two appear to be a very different people from one another, and not the same under different names as is commonly thought.

Seet. 12.

Which sufficiently appears from their language, which was quite different from one another. So *Herodotus* Ἦσαν οἱ Πελασγοὶ βάρβαρον γλῶσσαν ἔντες, they used a barbarous language : i. e. a language not understood by the *Hellens* ; who at first, had their chief residence in *Thessaly*, from whence by degrees they came forwards into *Greece*, as *Thucydides* shews. For although the name of *Hellens* at last spread it self over all the people of *Greece*, yet it was at first peculiar to that part of *Thessaly* called *Pthiotis*, and thence *Homer* calls them properly *Hellens* which followed *Achilles* from thence ; and it appears by *Homer* that there was a City there called Ἑλλάς, which as *Stephanus de Urbibus* tells us was there built by Ἑλλης, although he will not have him to be *Hellen* the son of *Deucalion*, but the son *Pthius*, wherein he is mistaken ; For *Thucydides* plainly shews, that it was from *Hellen* the son of *Deucalion*, that the name Ἑλλήνες came, and this *Hellen* lived in *Pthiotis*. But although they were first in *Pthiotis*, yet they daily increasing in numbers and power, by degrees they got all *Thessaly* into their hands, of which one part was called πελασγιῶτες ; afterwards under *Dorus* the son of *Hellen* they conquered *Hestiaeis*, that part of *Thessaly* which lies under the Mountains *Ossa* and *Olympus* ; from thence they were beaten back by the *Cadmeans* into *Pindus*, where the *Greeks* were first called Μακεδνοὶ, as *Herodotus* tells us ; from hence they went into *Dryopis*, and thence into *Peloponnesus*, and there had the name *Dorians* ; but before their coming hither, they had first secured themselves of the *Hellens* lying between *Thessaly* and *Peloponnesus*, and there they dispossessed the *Pelasgi* in all the *Attick* region ; who were now forced to submit or to fly ; they who submitted, as most of them did, were incorporated into the *Greeks*, and became one people with them, and so by degrees lost that former language which was peculiar to themselves and wholly distinct from the *Greek* tongue. That the *Hellens* did  
thus



thus gradually come into *Peloponnesus*, is evident from the names of *people* and *places* common to *Thessaly* and *Peloponnesus* which came from hence, that though the *Greeks* left the *Cities* behind them, yet they carried most of the names along with them. Thus the *Achæi*, *Ionians*, and *Æolians*, and *Dorians* in *Peloponnesus* came from those of the same names in *Thessaly*; and so likewise the names of these following *Regions* and *Cities* were common to both, as *Ellopia*, *Estiæa*, *Eretria*, and *Oropos*, *Graia*, *Larissa*, *Psophis*, *Iton*, *Oecalia* and very many others. *Salmasius* seems to be of opinion, that the *Pelasgi* never used any language distinct from the *Hellens*; but besides that it is directly contrary to the testimony of *Herodotus*, the arguments he produceth for it are very weak. The first is because the *Pelasgi* that went into *Italy*, did use the *Greek* tongue, from their calling *Agylla Cære*, from *αἶγες*, a word pronounced from one on the Walls; and because the *Arcades* used only the *Greek* language in the *Æolian Dialect*, which *E-vander* carried with him into *Italy*, and from which most of the old *Roman* language was derived. But doth not *Herodotus* expressly say, that after the mixture between the *Greeks* and *Pelasgi* these by degrees lost their own proper language and made use of the common *Greek* tongue? Yet afterwards too it is evident from *Herodotus* in some places, as at *Crotona*, they did use a language different from the *Greek*. His other argument is, that the names of the eldest persons mentioned were originally *Greek*; but this is expressly denied by *Strabo* who makes the contrary one of his strongest arguments, that the *Barbarians* did anciently inhabit *Greece*; and instanceth in *Cecrops*, *Codrus*, *Æolus*, *Cothus*, *Drymas*, *Crimanus*. Thus we have abundantly proved against the common opinion, that *Greece* was not first peopled by the *Hellens*, or the posterity of *Elisa*, although these did afterwards come to the full possession of *Greece*.

De Hellen. p.  
315.

It remains that we shew whence these *Pelasgi* came, and of whose posterity they were, and what the language was which was used by them. He that gave the name to this people according to the *Grecian fables*, was one *Pelagrus*, which none will wonder at among them, whose constant custom it was, (partly by reason of their *Ignorance* of the true account of their names, and partly by their *pride* that they might not seem ignorant

Sett. 13.

norant of any thing) when they meet with any names of people, to find out some person near it who was the founder of them. Thus *Attica* from *Actæus*, it being anciently called *Ἀκτῆς*, and *Cranae* from *Cranaus*, *Egialea* from *Egialeus*, *Mauritania* from *Maurus*, *Scythia* from one *Scythes*, *Galatæa* from *Galates*, and thus in multitudes of other names. But from the name *Pelasgi* we may probably find out the true founder of the people, allowing that variation which is usually caused through the *Greeks* melting the harsher words of the *Eastern* languages into a sound fit for their more delicate palates, as is evident in the comparing the names of the Prophets in *Hebrew*, with what they are in the *Greek version*. Thus the *Pelasgi* may with great probability be derived from פֶּלֶג, *Phaleg*; for which we have the concurrent testimony of two learned persons, *Grotius* and *Salmasius*, who are contented to mention it, without bringing much evidence of reason for it. What they only touch at, we shall endeavour to make out more at large; which we shall do by removing the great presumptions against it, and laying down the probabilities for it. The great *presumptions* lying against it are; for that the *Isles* of the *Nations* fell to the posterity of *Jepheth*, and that *Phaleg* lived with *Eber* in *Chaldæa*. For the first, it must be acknowledged that the greatest part of the *Countries* lying upon the *Ocean* and *Mediterranean*, were in the time when *Moses* wrote so inhabited; not that the habitations of the *sons* of *Noah*, had their bounds and limits set them either by *God* or *Noah*, but that the posterity of *Japhet* did chiefly address themselves to those parts which lay towards *Europe*; but yet not so, as to exclude any of the posterity of *Sem*, if their necessities for further room made it necessary for them to seek for habitations further abroad. For we can have no reason to think, that because the chief of *Sem's* posterity did live together, therefore none of them went further off, which necessity would put them upon because of their great increase; for we read of *Phaleg* and others, that besides those in direct line to *Abraham* (whose *Genealogy* it was *Moses* his great design to recount) they begat many other *sons* and *daughters*, which would make it necessary for them, to seek their habitations further abroad. And that *Phaleg* and *Ragan* did so, we have the express testimony of *Epiphanius*, φαλὲκ καὶ Ραγᾶν οἰτίτες ὄντι

*Grot. not. in lib.*  
*1. de jur. bel.*  
*Ec.*  
*Cap. 3.*  
*Sal. de Hellen.*

*Gen. 11. 19, 21.*



ἐπὶ τὸ ἑὺρώπῃς κλίμα ῥευκότες πρὸ τῆς Σκυθίας μέγῃ καὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἔθνεσι περὶ σκεῖθον, ἀπὸ τῆς δὲ Θήρας ἡλικίας, καὶ ἐπέκρινον ἕξ ἑπερ οἱ Θεῶν γένοντο. *De Scythis, ep. ad Acu. & Paulum.*

*That from the age of Therah and thence forward Phaleg and Ragau diverted toward the Clime of Europe, to part of Scythia, and were joyned with those Nations from which the Thracians arose.* Several things make this not so improbable as some have imagined it to be ; for first, it is the constant acknowledgment of all sober inquirers into the *original* of the *Greeks*, that *Greece* was first peopled from *Scythia* ; and indeed almost all the *Nations* in *Europe* have come out of that *Country* : besides there is evidence of it, even in the *Grecian Fables* ; for *Prometheus* ( from whom the *Greeks* derived themselves ) is fabled by them to lie bound in Mount *Caucasus*, which must be supposed to be the *Country* from whence he came. Again, it is evident already that the *Hellens* came not into *Greece* before it was peopled by the *Pelasgi*, and that these had different *language* and *customs* from one another ; now then in all probability, although the posterity of *Elisa* might come first down from *Scythia* into those parts, and seat themselves in *Macedonia* and *Thessaly*, where they had in probability more than room enough at first and a *Country* to their desire : they might be willing to permit the posterity of *Phaleg* to pass on further ; for in those first plantations we cannot otherwise conceive, but that the *last comers* must be the *furthest goers* ; unless they had strength enough to drive the former inhabitants out of their seats whereof they were already possessed, as the *Scythians* did afterwards, and so the *Hellens* : So then the posterity of *Phaleg* being forced to quit their own *Country* because of the multitude of inhabitants, must be supposed to take that course, where in probability they might find an empty seat fit for them to dwell in ; thence they come towards *Europe* ; for they saw how the posterity of *Sem* did spread its self *Eastward* already, and *Cham* *Southward*, and coming to part of that vast *Country* of *Scythia*, which was both already taken up and not so convenient an habitation for them, they draw downwards towards *Thracia*, and there the posterity of *Thiras*, from whom the *Thracians* came, had already possessed themselves ; passing further into *Thessaly*, they find that already planted by some of the posterity of *Elisa*, but as yet but scant and thin of inhabitants ; therefore they disperse themselves

up and down through some part of *Epirus*, most part of *Ellas*, and some pass into *Peloponnesus*, where they fix themselves chiefly upon *Arcadia*, and thence spread up and down by degrees towards the *Sea-side*; for we cannot but think that the *Maritime parts* were the last peopled, partly for fear of another deluge, partly for want of conveniency of *Navigation*, most of their travels being by *Land*; and partly when *Navigation* grew more in use for fear of *Pirates*, who drove a great trade upon the *Coasts* of *Greece* in elder times, as is most evident from *Thucydides* in the beginning of his History. Thus we have a reasonable account given of the *Pelasgi* their first coming into *Greece*, and how by degrees the *Hellens* came to possess their Country, and what a fair pretence the *Arcadians* had to boast of the greatest antiquity, their Country being probably first peopled by the *Pelasgi* of any part of the whole *Chersonese*, and the seat of the leader of the whole company whom they call *Pelasgus*, and the Scriptures *Phaleg*.

Sect. 14.

Having thus far cleared the *Antiquities* of *Greece* as to the first planters of it, whom we have evidenced to have been the *Pelasgi*, and these derived from *Peleg*, it will be no great difficulty to resolve what language they brought along with them, which must be supposed to be the same with that used in the family from whence *Peleg* or *Phaleg* came, as to the substance of it, although it might admit as great variation of *Dialect* from it as the *Chaldee* or *Syriack* doth. But this I will not only suppose, but offer these probabilities for the proof of it; the first is, the agreement of the ancient *Greek* language with the *Hebrew* in many of its primitive words; and here we have a most rational and probable account given of it; which is, the *Greeks* mixing with the *Pelasgi*, and both coming to be one people, they must needs retain many of the old words used by the *Pelasgi* in their *Greek* language; which are evidently of an *Eastern* extraction, the ground of which cannot with such probability be fetched from *Cadmus* and the *Phœnicians*, because it is not so easie admission of a foreign Language after the perfection of their own, unless by long tract of time, or great numbers over-running the former people, neither of which can be so truly affirmed of *Cadmus* and his company; for they were soon driven out of *Greece*, he himself ending his days in *Illiricum*, neither was their spread so large

as



as that of the *Pelasgi*, who were before possessors of the Country; and it is continually seen how impossible it is for any Conquerors, as the *Greeks* were, to bring their own language so into a place, where some of the former people are suffered to live, and not to retain many of their old words among them, and so make the Language mixt of both, as it is in all Nations conquered by the *Romans*; the *Roman* not being purely spoken by any, but corrupted with a mixture of the former Language in use among them. The second argument is from the different pronunciation and dialects in use in the *Greek language*; of which no account so likely can be given, as the mixture with different Languages. - This is most evident in the *Dorick Dialect*; for the *Dorians* inhabiting probably where most of the *Pelasgi* had been, their pronunciation and dialect comes the nearest to the *Eastern* of any of the *Greeks*: For in the *Dorick Dialect* the πλατειασμός or broad pronunciation, is most taken notice of: So he in *Theocritus* upbraids the *Dorians*, ὅτι πλατειάζουσιν ἅπαντα, they speak every thing very broad; which answers to the pronunciation of the *Eastern Languages*; besides, the *Dorick Dialect* delights much in adding a to the end of words, which besides that it is the custom of *Eastern Tongues*, especially the *Syriack*, it doth much widen the pronunciation. The third Argument is from the remainders of the *Eastern Tongues* in those places, especially where the *Pelasgi* had been. The *Pelasgi* are much taken notice of for their frequent removes and travelling from one place to another; which I suppose was chiefly after the *Hellens* had conquer'd the Country where they dwelt, then they were forced to go seek better habitations abroad; thence *Strabo* calls the Nation of the *Pelasgi* πολύπλανον καὶ ταχὺ τὸ ἔθνος πρὸς ἐπαναστάσεις: and elsewhere that they were πολλαχῶς τῆς εὐρώπης τὸ παλαιὸν πλανώμενοι, they went up and down to a great part of *Europe*; but we may suppose them to have made their first and chief resort to the neighbour Islands to *Greece*; where we shall see what evidence they left of their language there. The first Island we meet with them in, is *Creete*; so *Strabo* speaking of them, καὶ ὃ τῆς Κρήτης ἐποικοὶ γέγονασιν, ὡς φησὶν Ὅμηρος; that a Colony of them lived in *Creete*, for which he voucheth *Homer's* authority:

Lib. 5.

Lib. 12.

Lib. 5.

Odysf. τ. 173.

Ἄλλη δ' ἄλλων γλῶσσα μιμνημένη, ἐν ᾗ Ἀχαιοί,  
 Ἐν δ' ἑτέσκεπτεσιν μεγαλήτορες, ἐν δ' Κυθῶνες,  
 Δαρῖες τε τευκαῖνες, δίοι τε Πελασγοί.

De Phæn.

Col. I. 1. c. 15.

Lib. I. c. 9.

Geogr. p. 2. l. 1.

c. 12.

Lib. I. c. 9.

De Spect. c. 8.

Lib. I. c. 12.

It is evident then that the *Pelasgi* were in *Creete*. Now most of the *Cretan* words are of an *Eastern* extraction, if we believe the learned *Bochartus*, who hath promised a discourse on that subject; besides *Creete* we find the *Pelasgi* in *Chios*, καὶ ἥτοι ὁ οἰκιστὴς αὐτῶν Πελασγὸς φασὶ τὰς ἐν Θεπυαλίας, saith *Strabo*, the Inhabitants of *Chios* say that the *Pelasgi* of *Thessaly* were their first Inhabitants; and here the fore-named learned person hath derived the Name *Chios*, the Mountain *Pelineus*, and the Wine *Arvisum*, all from the *Eastern* languages. The next we find them in, is *Lesbos*, καὶ γὰρ τὴν λεσβὸν Πελασγίαν εἰσηγάσκει, which from them was called *Pelascgia*, saith *Strabo*, whose name is likewise fetched out of the *East*. By *Bochartus* further we find them in *Lemnos* and *Imbros*: so *Anticlides* in *Strabo*, περὶ τῶν περὶ Πηλεσγῶν τὰ περὶ λέμνον ἰμβρον κῆσαι; concerning whose names, see *Bochartus* 82. I know that learned Author makes the *Phœnicians* the Authors of all these names, from no other ground generally, but because they are of an *Eastern* derivation; but according to what we have laid down, we may yield to the thing it self, and upon clearer grounds; for of some of these *Islands* he ingenuously confesseth he can find no evidence of the *Phœnicians* being in them. *Phœnices* in his *Insulis* habitasse nusquam legimus: but we find it very plain, that in those very *Islands* the *Pelasgi* inhabited; and whether account then be more probable, let the Reader judge. One thing more I shall insist on, which is the Original of the *Samotheacian Mysteries*: That these were as to their names from the *Eastern* languages, is now acknowledged by all learned men, the *Cabiri* being so evidently derived from כביר, which signifies strength and power, i. e. the *Dii potes*, so *Cabiri* is explained by *Varro* and *Tertullian*, and the particular names of the several *Cabiri* mentioned by the *Scholias*t on *Apollonius*, Ἀξίερος, Ἀξιόκερσα, Ἀξιόκεροσ and Κασμυλ are very handsomely explained by that learned and excellent *Bochartus* from the *Eastern* languages; only he will needs have them derived from the *Phœnicians*, whereas *Herodotus* expressly tells us that they were



were from the *Pelasgi*, whose words are these ; ὅς τις ὁ τὰ Κα- Lib. 2.  
 λείων ὄργανα μεμύηται τὰ Σαμοθρῆνικαῖα : ὅπτε λέγουσι λαβόντες ὧδ' Πε-  
 λασγῶν : And again, τὴν δὲ Σαμοθρῆνικὴν οἰκὴν περὶ τὴν Πελασγοῖ  
 ἐπὶ τι παρ' Ἀθιωαῖσι πύοικαι ἐγίνοντο, καὶ ὧδ' ὅτι τὴν Σαμοθρῆνικὴν τὰ  
 ὄργανα ὁδραμεύδουσι. We see evidently by this, that the *Samothracians* derived their *Mysteries* from the *Pelasgi*; and with-  
 out all question they had their *names* from thence, whence  
 they derived their *Mysteries* : And to this purpose it is fur-  
 ther observable, that as the old *Hetrurians* were certainly a  
*Colony* of the *Pelasgi*, upon their removal out of *Greece* ; so  
*Vossius* observes that the old *Hetruscan language* (*fere à yris ha-*  
*bet cuncta sacrorum nomina*) hath almost all the sacred *appa-*  
*ellations* from the *Eastern tongues*. For which purpose it is fur-  
 ther observable, which *Grotius* takes notice of, that the *jus*  
*pontificum Romanorum* was taken a great part from the *He-*  
*trusci*, and the *Hetrurians* had it *ab Hebræis* out of the *Eastern*  
 parts.

De Idol. l. 2. c. 57.  
 Annot. in Mat.  
 12. 1.

By all which I cannot conceive but this opinion, notwith-  
 standing its *novelty*, is advanced to as high a degree of proba-  
 bility, as any that stands on the like foundations ; and not  
 only so, but it is an excellent *clue* to direct us to the *Labyrinth*  
 of *Antiquities*, and gives us a fair account whence the *Eastern*  
*Tongues* came to be so much used among both the ancient  
*Greeks* and *Hetrurians*. One thing more this will help us to  
 understand far better than any *salvo* hath been yet used for it ;  
 which is the affinity spoken of by *Arius King* of *Lacedæmon* in  
 his Letters to *Onias*, between the *Jews* and *Lacedæmonians* :  
 εὐρέθη ἐν γράφῃ περὶ τε τῶν Σπαρτιατῶν καὶ Ἰουδαίων ὅτι εἰσὶν ἀδελφοὶ  
 καὶ ὅτι εἰσὶν ἐν ᾧ Ἰσὺς Ἀβραάμ : which is explained by *Josephus* thus :  
 ἐντυχόντες γράφῃ τινι, εὐρέθη ὡς ὅτι ἐνὸς εἶεν ᾧ Ἰσὺς Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ Λακεδαι-  
 μόνιοι ἐν τῇ περὶ Ἀβραάμ οὐκιστοῦ : They had found in a book  
 that the *Jews* and *Lacedæmonians* were of the same stock, from  
 their mutual relation to *Abraham*. *Vossius* thinks the Original  
 of this was from those of the posterity of *Anak*, who came  
 into *Greece*, and peopled *Sparta*, and would seem to have  
 been of the posterity of *Abraham* ; or that they were partly of  
 the posterity of *Abraham* by *Agar* or *Ceturah*, and partly of  
 the *Canaanites* driven out by *Joshua* : But how unlikely a thing  
 is it (supposing *Sparta* peopled by the *Canaanites*, which yet  
 is not evident.) that they should give out themselves to be of  
 that

Seet. 15.

1 Maccab. 12  
 21.

Antiq. l. 13 c. 9

De Idol. l. 1. c. 13

that *stock* which they had been expelled their Country by : And for the true posterity of *Abraham* coming thither, as we have no ground for it but the bare assertion, so we have this strong evidence against it, that all that came from *Abraham* were circumcised, as the *Ishmaelites*, *Hagarens*, &c. which we never read of among the *Lacedæmonians*. *H. Grotius* differs not much from the opinion of *Vossius* concerning the ground of this kindred between the *Jews* and *Spartans* : For in his notes on that place in the *Maccabees*, where it is spoken of, he gives this account of it. The *Dorians*, of whom the *Spartans* were a part, came from the *Pelasgi* ; the language of the *Pelasgi* was different from that of the *Greeks*, as appears by *Herodotus* in his *Clio* : ἦσαν οἱ Πελασγοὶ βαρβαροὶ γλώτταν ἰέμεν. Now the *Pelasgi* (saith he) are פְּלִשְׁתִּים *dispersi*, a *scattered Nation* ; thence he supposeth these *Pelasgi* or banished people, to have come from the Confines of *Arabia* and *Syria*, in which the posterity of *Abraham* and *Ceturah* had placed themselves. But 1. it is uncertain whether the posterity of *Abraham* by *Keturah* were placed so near *Canaan* or no. I know *Junius* endeavours to find the seat of all the sons of *Ceturah* in *Arabia* ; but *Mercer* gives several not improbable reasons why he conceives them placed not in the *East* of *Canaan*, but in the *Eastern parts* of the world. 2. We have no evidence at all of any remove of these sons of *Abraham* by *Ceturah* out of the parts of *Arabia*, supposing them placed there ; nor any reason why they should be banished thence. 3. That which was the badge of *Abraham's* posterity, was never that we read of in use among the *Spartans*, which was *Circumcision*. Indeed in much later Ages than this we speak of, we read of a people among the *Thracians* who were circumcised, whom the *Greeks* themselves judged to be *Jews*. So *Aristophanes* brings the *Odontades* in. Τῆς τῶν Ὀδοντάντων τὸ πῖθ' ἀποτέδεχεν ἂν ἀποτέδεχεν (saith the *Scholiast*) i. e. ἀνέτιλλον, ἐλεαίνοντο ὃ καὶ ἀπετίλλοντο οἱ δεξιὰς τὰ δεινὰ καὶ ἀπιστευμένα εἶχον αὐτὰ. Whereby it is plain that *Circumcision* was in use among the *Thracians* ; for these *Odontades* were (saith the *Scholiast*) a people of *Thrace*. φασὶ ὅτι αὐτοὶ Ἰουδαῖοι εἶναι. It seems it was a tradition among them that they were *Jews*. If so, it seems most probable that they were some of the *ten Tribes*, who were placed about *Colchis*, and the adjacent places : For *Herodotus* in *Euterpe* saith, that  
the

*Icharnens. Att.*  
sc. 4.



the *Syrians* that lived about the Rivers *Thermodon* and *Parthenius*, learned Circumcision from the *Colchi*, of whom he saith, *Μῆνοι πάντων Κόλχοι καὶ Αἰγύπτιοι καὶ Αἰθίοπες ἀπέχουσιν ἀπὸ ἀρχῆς τὰ αἰδῶτα*. Only the *Colchi*, and *Egyptians*, and *Ethiopians* had originally the custom of Circumcision. Or else these *Odomanes* might be some of the dispersed *Jews* in *Armenia*, where *Strabo* mentions a Region called *Odomatis*, and so they retained the name of the place from whence they came, after their removal into *Thrace*. But what-ever these *Odomanes* were, they were far enough from the *Spartans*, who never were thus suspected of *Judaism*, nor laught at for Circumcision. So that this opinion of *Grotius* on that account seems not very probable. *Bochartus*, who hath been so happy in many other conjectures, yet here gives out, unless it may depend upon the testimony of *Claudius Iolans* in *Stephanus Byzantius*, who fabulously derives the *Jews* from one *Judeus* *Sparton*, who went from *Thebes* along with *Bacchus* into the Wars; which *Sparton* they might confound with another *Sparton*, the Son of *Phonoreus*, the Founder of *Sparta*; which yet is rejected as a Fable by *Pausanias* in *Laconicis*. Surely the *Lacedæmonians* were very ambitious of kindred with the *Jews*, that would claim it upon such grounds as these, especially at such a time when the people of the *Jews* were under distress, and their kindred might be like to cost them so dear; And if they had never such a mind to have claimed kindred with the *Jews*, they would certainly have done it upon a more plausible testimony than the Fable of one *Claudius Iolans*, that had neither sense nor reason in it; and yet supposing his Fable true, it had been nothing to the purpose, without the linking another Fable to it, which was so gross, that even the *Greeks* themselves were ashamed of it, who were always the most daring forgers of Fables in the world. But let us see further what the *Divine* (as some have loved to call him) *Jos. Scaliger* saith to it: All that he saith, is only a wonder or two at it: *Quid magis mirum quàm Lacedæmonios ab Abraham prognatos esse, &c.* and a refutation of an absurd opinion, that *Oebalus* the Father of *Tyndareus*, and Grandfather of *Castor*, *Pollux*, and *Helena*, was the same with *Ebal*, mentioned *Gen. 10. 28.* which there can be no reason for, since *Ebal* was the Son of *Joktan*, and so of another race from *Abraham*; and *Joktan's*

*Geogr. l. 11.*

*De Phœnic. Col. l. 1. c. 22.*

*Canon. Isag. p. 332.*

Sons.

Sons were placed *Eastward*, but chiefly *Oebalus* was within an hundred years before the destruction of *Troy*; but *Phaleg* Uncle to *Ebal*, died 664 years before *Oebalus* in *A. M.* 1993. Thus far then we cannot find any plausible account of this claim of *kindred*: but though it be an endless task to make good all the claims of *kindred* in the world, especially to persons of power and authority, yet there being no visible interest or design which the *Spartans* could have in such a claim, especially at that time with a Nation generally hated and maligned by Heathen *Idolaters*, we cannot suppose but there must be some at least plausible ground for such a persuasion among them. What if we should conjecture that the *Spartans* might find in the *Greek* version of the *Pentateuch*, which was much spread abroad at that time among the Sons of *Ishmael*, one whose name makes the nearest approach to their *Cadmus*, from whom they suppose themselves derived; for the youngest of *Ishmael's* Sons was called *Kedemah*, *Gen.* 25. 15. which the *Syriack* renders *Kedem*, the very name of *Cadmus* in the *Eastern Tongues*. But this being a light conjecture, I pass it by, and return to the subject of our discourse, which gives a plausible account of the ground of this *kindred*. We have already shewed that the *Pelasgi* were the first who peopled *Greece*, (*ἡ τὴν Ἑλλάδα πᾶσαν ἐπέπλασε*, is *Strabo's* expression of that Nation, that it spread over all *Greece*;) and withall it appears that the chief Seat of the *Pelasgi* was in *Arcadia*, to which next adjoyns *Laconia*; and therefore in all probability was peopled by them; and besides, the *Dorians* sprang from the *Pelasgi*, and the *Spartans* were a part of the *Dorians*, as appears already out of *Grotius*; so that what *kindred* the *Pelasgi* had, was derived down to the *Spartans*; and we have manifested that these *Pelasgi* were from *Phaleg*, and the Scripture tells us that *Phaleg* was the Son of *Eber*, from whom *Abraham* came in a direct and lineal succession. And thus the *Jews* coming from *Abraham*, and the *Spartans* by the *Pelasgi* from *Phaleg*, they both came out of the same stock: For so *Josephus* expresseth it, not that the *Lacedæmonians* came from *Abraham*, but that the *Jews* and they were both *ἐξ ἐνὸς γένους*, out of the same stock, and both had relation to *Abraham*; the *Jews* as coming in a direct line, the *Spartans* as deriving from *Phaleg*; from whom *Abraham* came. And thus much may now suffice



fice to clear the first Plantation of *Greece*, and to shew how consonant it is to sacred *Scripture*; which I have taken the more pains in, because of the serviceableness of this discourse to that end, and to shew what *use* may be made of this kind of *Learning*, for vindicating the honour of the *sacred Scriptures*.

The only thing remaining as to the *Origin of Nations*, is the peopling of that vast *Continent of America*, which I cannot think we have yet sufficient *information*, either concerning the *passages* thither, especially *East* and *North*, or concerning any *records* the *Indians* have among themselves absolutely to determine any thing in it. It seems most probable that the several parts of it were peopled at *several times*, and from several *parts*, especially *North* and *East*; but to go about absolutely to determine from what *Nation*, in what *Age*, by what *means* they were first peopled, were a piece of as great confidence as ignorance, 'till we have more certain discoveries of it. I chuse therefore rather to referr the Reader to the bandyings of this Controversie in the many Writers about it, than to undertake any thing as to the decision of it. Only in the general it appears from the remaining tradition of the *Flood*, and many Rites and Customs used among them, that they had the same original with us, and that there can be no argument brought against it from themselves, since some *Authors* tell us, that the eldest *Accounts* and *Memoires* they have, do not exceed 800 years backward; and therefore their *Testimony* can be of no *validity* in a matter of so great *Antiquity*, as the *Origin of Nations* is.

Vi. Grotium  
Joh. de Laet.  
Horn. de Orig.  
Gent. American.

V. Manasse Ben.  
Israel. Spes Israel.  
Et Spizzel. de Israelitis Americanis.

## CHAP. V.

## Of the Origin of the Heathen Mythology.

*That there were some remainders of the ancient history of the World preserved in the several Nations after the dispersion. How it came to be corrupted : by decay of knowledge, increase of Idolatry, confusion of languages. An enquiry into the cause of that. Difficulties against the common opinion that languages were confounded at Babel. Those difficulties cleared. Of the fabulousness of Poets. The particular ways whereby the Heathen Mythology arose. Attributing the general history of the world to their own Nation. The corruption of Hebraisms. Alteration of names. Ambiguity of sense in the Oriental languages. Attributing the actions of many to one person, as in Jupiter, Bacchus, &c. The remainders of Scripture-history among the Heathens. The names of God, Chaos, formation of man among the Phœnicians. Of Adam among the Germans, Egyptians, Cilicians. Adam under Saturn. Cain among the Phœnicians. Tubal-Cain and Jubal under Vulcan and Apollo. Naamah under Minerva. Noah under Saturn, Janus, Prometheus and Bacchus. Noah's three sons under Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto. Canaan under Mercury, Nimrod under Bacchus, Magog under Prometheus. Of Abraham and Isaac among the Phœnicians. Jacob's service under Apollo's. The βασιλία from Bethel. Joseph under Apis. Moses under Bacchus. Joshua under Hercules. Balaam under the old Silenus.*

SECT. I.

THE main particulars contained in the *Scriptures* concerning the History of *Ancient Times* being thus far cleared, there remains only that *evidence* which there is of the *truth* of the historical part of those eldest times, in those *foot-steps* of it which are contained in the *Heathen Mythology*. For we cannot conceive, that since we have manifested that all mankind did come from the posterity of *Noah*, that all those *passages* which concerned the *History* of the World, should be presently *obliterated* and extinguished among them, but some kind of *tradition* would be still preserved, although by degrees it



it would be so much altered for want of certain *records* to preserve it in, that it would be a hard matter to discover its *original* without an exact comparing it with the true *History* it self from whence it was first taken. For it fared with this *Tradition* of the first ages of the world, as with a person who hath a long time travelled in foreign parts, who by the variety of *Climes* and *Countries* may be so far altered from what he was, that his own *relations* may not know him upon his return, but only by some certain *marks* which he hath in his body, by which they are assured, that however his *complexion* and *visage* may be altered, yet the person is the same still. Thus it was in this *original tradition* of the world; through its continual passing from one age to another, and the various humours, tempers, and designs of men, it received strange *disguises* and alterations as to its outward *favour* and *complexion*; but yet there are some such certain *marks* remaining on it, by which we find out its true original. Two things then will be the main subject of our enquiry here. 1. *By what means the original tradition came to be altered and corrupted.* 2. *By what marks we may discern its true original,* or what evidences we have of the remainders of *Scripture-history* in the *Heathen Mythology*.

1. Concerning the *means* whereby the *Tradition* by degrees came to be *corrupted*. There may be some more general, and others more particular. The general causes of it were;

*Sett. 2.*

1. The gradual decay of *knowledge* and increase of *Barbarism* in the world; occasioned by the want of certain *records* to preserve the ancient *History* of the World in: Which we at large discoursed of in our entrance on this subject. Now in the decay of knowledge, there must needs follow a sudden and strange *alteration* of the memory of former times, which hath then nothing to preserve it, but the most uncertain report of *fame*, which alters and disguiseth things according to the *humours*, and *inclinations*, and *judgments* of those whose hands it passeth through.

*Book I. c. I.  
Sett. 16.*

2. The gradual increase of *Idolatry* in the world: which began soon after the dispersion of *Nations*, and in whose age, we cannot at so great a distance and in so great obscurity precisely determine; but as soon as *Idolatry* came in, all the ancient *tradition* was made subservient in order to that end; and those per-

sons whose *memories* were preserved in several Nations, by degrees came to be *worshipped* under diversities of names; and such things were annexed to the former *traditions* as would tend most to advance the greatest *superstition* in the world.

3. The *Confusion of Languages at Babel*, was one great reason of corrupting the ancient *tradition* of the world. For in so great variety (as suddenly happened) of *Languages* in the world, it cannot be conceived but such things which might be preserved in some uniform manner, had all Nations used the same *language*, would through the diversity of *Idioms* and *Properties* of several Tongues be strangely altered and disguised, as will appear afterwards. This *alteration* of *Languages* in the world upon the confusion of Tongues at *Babel*, brought as great a confusion into the original tradition, as it did among those who were the designers of that work.

*Seet. 3.*

And because this *subject* of the *original* and cause of this diversity of *languages* among men, doth both tend to explain the present subject, and to clear the truth of *Scripture-history*, I shall a little further enquire into it. Chiefly on this account, because it is pretended that such a *confusion* is needless which is delivered in *Scripture*, for the producing such diversities of languages, which would arise through mere length of time, and the varieties of *Climes* and *Customs* in the world. But if we only speak concerning the sence of *Moses* about it, the enquiry is of greater difficulty than at first view it seems to be. For it is pretended that *Moses* no-where speaks of a *diversity* of *languages*, as we understand it, but only of a *confusion* of their speech who were at *Babel*, which might well be, although they all used the same language; that is, there might be a confusion raised in their minds, that they could not understand one another; their *notions* of things being disturbed, so that though they heard one word, they had different *apprehensions* of it: some thinking it signified one thing and some another: as *Julius Scaliger* tells us that the *Jews* he had conversed with, did not understand by it a *multiplication* of Tongues; but only by that *confusion* their former *no ions* of things by the same *words* were altered. As if one called for אבן a *stone*, one by that word understands *lime*, another *water*, another *sand*, &c. this must needs produce a strange *confusion* among them, and enough to make them desist from their work. But supposing no such division of *languages* there,

V. Mer. Casaub.  
de 4. linguis p. 3.  
Ccc.

Exercit. in Cor.  
dan. 259. sect. 1.



there, yet after their *dispersion*, which might be caused by the former *confusion*, by the different *Laws, Rites, and Customs, Commerce, and Trading*, and Tract of *Time*, there would have risen a division of their several Tongues. But if there were such a *division of Tongues* miraculously caused there (that as it is commonly said, all those who were of the same language, went together in their several companies) whence comes it to pass, that in their *dispersion* we read of several families dispersed, which used the same language after their dispersion? as all the sons of *Canaan* mentioned, *Gen. 10. 15, 16, 17, 18.* used the *Canaanitish* tongue: in *Greece, Favan* and *Elisa* had the same language. In *Egypt, Misi aim* and *Pathrusim*; in *Arabia* the sons of *Joktan* and *Chus*; in *Chaldæa* *Aram* and *Uz* the inhabitants of *Syria, Mash* of *Mesopotamia, Nimrod* of *Babylon, Assur* of *Assyria*: whence comes it to pass if their several Tongues were the cause of their *dispersion*, that these several heads of families should use the same tongue? Another reason against the common opinion, is this, which seems to have a great deal of force in it. If *tongues* were divided at *Babel* as it is imagined; whence was it, that the nearer any Nation lay to those who had the primitive language the *Hebrew*, they did participate more of that tongue than those who were more remote, as is plain in the *Chaldeans, Canaanites, Greeks*, and others? whereas if their languages were divided at *Babel*, they would have retained their own languages as well as others. This very argument prevailed so far with the learned *Is. Casaubon*, as appears by his *adversaria* on this subject (published by the learned Doctor's son) as to make him leave the common opinion, and to conclude the several tongues to be only some variations from the *Hebrew*, but yet so as many new words were invented too. Hence he observes that the *Asiatick Greeks* came nearer to the *Hebrew* than the *European*. And if this opinion hold true, it is the best foundation for deriving other languages from the *Hebrew*: a thing attempted by the same learned person, as you may see in the book fore-cited, and endeavoured by *Guichardus, Avenarius* and others. Thus we see there is no agreement in men's minds concerning the division of tongues at *Babel*.

*Diatrib. de L.  
Heb. p. 17, 18:*

*Pag. 47.*

*Sect. 4.*

But having set down this opinion with its reasons, I shall not so leave the received opinion, but shall first see what may be said for that, and leave the judgment concerning the probability

bability of either to the understanding Reader. And it seems to be grounded on these reasons. 1. That had it been left to men's own *choice* ; there cannot be a sufficient reason assigned of the diversity of *languages* in the world. For there being one *language* originally in the world, whereby men did represent their *conceptions* to one another ; we cannot imagine that men should of themselves introduce so great an *alteration*, as whereby to take off that necessary society and converse with each other, which even nature it self did put men upon. Hence *Calvin* and others conclude that *prodigii loco habenda est linguarum diversitas* ; because there having been that freedom of converse among men, it is not to be supposed they should of themselves, cut it off to their mutual disadvantage. But to this it is said, *that the long tract of time and diversity of customs might alter the language*. I grant it much, but not *wholly* ; and they would only therein differ in their languages, wherein their *customs* differed : so that there would remain still such an *agreement* as whereby they might understand each other ; which it will be hard to find in many of the eldest *languages*. As for the *length of time*, though that doth alter much in reference to *words* and *phrases*, in which that of *Horace* holds true, *Multa renascentur quæ jam cecidere, &c.* Yet it will be yet more difficult to find where mere length of time hath brought a whole *language* out of *use*, and another in the *room* of it. But that which I think deserves well to be considered, is this, that the greatest *alteration* of *languages* in the world hath risen from *Colonies* of Nations that used another language ; and so by the mixture of both together the language might be much altered : as the *Hebrew* by the *Chaldees* in *Babylon* : the *Spanish*, *Italian* and others by the *Latin*, as *Breerwood* shews, our own by the *Normans* and others. So that were there not a diversity of *languages* supposed, this *enterfering* of people would bring no considerable alteration along with it, no more than a *Colony* from *New England* would alter our language here. And as for another cause assigned of the *change* of languages, the *difference of climates*, which *Bodin* gives as the reason why the *Northern* people use *consonants* and *aspirates* so much, especially the *Saxons*, and those that live by the *Baltick Sea* who pronounce thus, *Per theum ferum pibimus penum finum*.  
And

Annot. in Gen.

II. 1, 2.

Enquiries, c.  
5, 6.

Method. hist. c. 9.



And so R. D. Kimchi observes of the Ephraimites, Judg. 12. 6. that it was the Air that was the cause of their *lisping*, and calling it *Sibboleth*, as he there observes of the men of *Sar-phath*, that is, the *French*, that they could not pronounce *Schin*, *Chaldaism*, c. 1. but pronounced it like *Thau Raphe*. But by these examples we see that this would cause only an *alteration* as to some *letters* and *syllables*, and rather as to the *pronunciation*, than any *variety* of the *language*. So that we see that, setting aside the *confusion* of *languages* at *Babel*, there can be no reason sufficient assigned for the variety of languages in the world,

2. Though it be granted, that a confusion in their minds without distinct *languages* were enough to make them desist from their work, yet the *context* in that place, Gen. 11. doth infer a diversity of *tongues*, as will appear from the *antece-dents* and *consequents*; as from the first verse, where it is not conceivable why it should be there taken notice of as such a remarkable circumstance, that then they had but *one language* before they set upon this *work*, if there was not a *diversity* of *tongues* caused by the work they went about; but especially ver. 6. where God takes such notice of this very thing, that they had but *one language*, wherein they were so confident to carry on their work; therefore, ver. 7. when he would destroy their *work* by *confounding their language*, it must be by *multi-plying* that *language* into many more; for it must be taken in opposition to what is said in the other verse. And what is there added, *their not understanding one anothers speech*, seems to referr not to their inward *conceptions*, as though they did not understand one anothers *minds*, but to the outward *expressions*, as שִׁבְחָה doth apparently relate to them further in ver. 8. this is set down as the cause of their *dispersion*, which had the tongue been the same afterwards as it was before, could have been no reason for it. Again some argue from the name *Babel* given to the place, from בָּבֶל, which signifies to *confound* and mingle things of several *kinds* together. So used Judg. 19. 21. Esay 30. 24. Job 6. 5. &c. thence the name בָּבֶל for בָּלְבָל the middle ל left out, as in *Golgotha* for *Golgoltha*, *Kigaltha* for *Kilkaltha*, and others of a like nature. Besides, there seems to be somewhat in what is said, *that the families were divided according to their tongues*, Genes. 10. 5, 20, 31. which doth at least imply, a *diversity* of *tongues* among them,

the cause of which must be assigned by them who will not allow of the *confusion* and *division* of *languages* at *Babel*. Further, this seems most agreeable to *God's end* in making of them thus leave off their work, that there might be not only a present judgment upon them, but that which might remain to *posterity* as a note of the folly of their *Ancestors*. Those who recede from the common opinion lest they should give advantage to *Infidels* by attributing that to a *miracle*, which might be done without, seem to be more wary than wise in it. For besides that it is certain that *miracles* may be in those things which might be effected otherwise by *natural causes*, when they are produced without the *help* of those *causes*, and in a space of time impossible to *nature* ; and that it hath not been as yet proved how such diversity of *tongues* as is in the world would have been effected without such a *miracle* ; it must be granted by them that there was a *miracle* in it ; and what greater difficulty there should be in the *variety* of *languages*, than in the signification of the same *words*, I understand not. But I see no necessity of asserting that every one of the *families* had a distinct *language*, and the common opinion of 70. or 72. as the *Gr families* and as many *languages*, is now taken for a groundless *fancy* by learned men : as is easily proved from the dividing *Father* and *Children*, whose families could not certainly be without them : and some supposed to be unborn then, as *Joktan's 13 Children* ; especially if we say as many do, that the *Confusion* was at the birth of *Phaleg*, and *Joktan* was his younger brother, as the *Jews* generally do. To the last objection it may be replied, that the agreement of *languages* in some *radical* words doth not infer the *derivation* of the one from the other, as is plain in the *Persian* and *German*, in which learned men have observed so many words alike. And so by *Busbequius* of the inhabitants about *Tauricke Chersoneuse* ; and so in most of our modern *tongues* there may be some words alike without any such *dependance* or *derivation*. Again, though it be granted that the *languages* of them who were at *Babel* were confounded, yet it is not necessary we should say that all *Noah's posterity* were there. It is thought by some that they were chiefly *Cham* and his *company* ; if so then *Sem* and his *posterity* might retain the *language* they had before, only with some *variations*.

But

Bota. Geor. l. 1.

c. 15.

Buxt. diatr.

sect. 54.

Buxt. diat sect.

68.

Lips. cent. 3. ep.

44.

Busbeq. ep. 24.

Mayer.

Philol. sacr. p. 2.

c. 6.



But this is very uncertain, unless we take it for *Heber* and *Peleg*, from whose vicinity other bordering *Nations* might make use of many of their primitive words : and for the *Greeks*, it will be granted that many of their words, especially the old *Beotick*, had affinity with the *Hebrew* ; but it was from the *Pelasgi* at first and *Cadmus* the *Phœnician* afterwards : the old *Canaanitish* language, being if not the pure *Hebrew*, yet a dialect of that tongue, as is proved by many learned men. But however these things be, it is not necessary to say that all *Mother tongues* so called, were then existent at that confusion : but the present curse did divide their languages who were there, and that all division of languages since, is to be looked upon as the effect of that curse.

It being thus manifested what a strange confusion of languages was caused in the world, we may thereby easily understand how the ancient tradition came to be corrupted and altered in the world.

Another reason of the alteration of the ancient tradition, was, the *fabulousness* of the *Poets* : for these made it their design to disguise all their ancient stories under *Fables*, in which they were so lost, that they could never recover them afterwards. For the elder *Poets* of *Greece* being men of greater learning than generally the people were of, and being conversant in *Agypt* and other parts, did bring in new reports of the ancient times which they received from the *Nations* they went to ; and by mixing their own traditions and others together, and by suiting what was remaining of the ancient tradition to these, they must needs make a strange confusion of things together, and leave them much more obscure and fabulous than they found them. And herein all their cunning and subtilty lay in putting a new face on whatever they borrowed from other Nations, and making them appear among themselves in a *Greek habit*, that the former owners of those traditions could scarce challenge them as theirs under so strange a *Metamorphosis*. For those things which were most plain and historical in the Fountains whence they derived them, they did so περιτυλίσσειν as *Clemens Alexandrinus* speaks, (or as *Origen*, περιέμπνυς ἀνέπλεον) wrapt them up under so great *Mythology* that the *Original Truths* can hardly be discerned, because of that multitude of prodigious fables,

Sect. 5.

4.

*Stromat. 6. c.  
Cels. l. 4.*

with which they have inlaid them. But as great as their *artifice* was in the doing this, we may yet discern apparently many of those particular *courses* which were taken by them to *disguise* and alter the *primitive tradition*.

I. *Attributing* what was done by the great *Ancestors* of mankind to some persons of their own Nations. Thus the *Thessalians* make *Deucalion* to be the person who escaped the *flood*, and from whom the world was peopled after it. And whoever compares the *relation* of the *flood* of *Deucalion* in *Apollodorus* with that in the *Scripture*, might easily render *Apollodorus* his Greek in the language of the *Scriptures*, only changing *Greece* into the whole *earth*, and *Deucalion* into *Noah*, *Parnassus* into *Ararat*, and *Jupiter* into *Jehovah*. On the same account the *Athenians* attribute the *flood* to *Ogyges*, not that the *flood* of *Ogyges* and *Deucalion* were particular and distinct *deluges*, which many have taken a great deal of needless pains to place in their several *ages*: But as *Deucalion* was of the eldest memory in *Thessaly*, so was *Ogyges* at *Athens*, and so the *flood* as being a matter of remotest *Antiquity*, was on the same account in both places attributed to both these. Because as mankind was supposed to begin again after the *flood*, so they had among them no memory extant of any elder than these two, from whom on that account they supposed mankind derived. And on the same reason it may be supposed that the *Assyrians* attribute the *flood* to *Xisuthrus*, whom they supposed to be a *King* of *Assyria*; but the circumstances of the story as delivered by *Alexander Polyhistor*, and *Abydenus*, are such as make it clear to be only a remainder of the *universal flood* which happened in the time of *Noah*. So the *Thessalians* make *Prometheus* to be the *Protoclast*; the *Peleponnesians* *Phoroneus*, as *Clemens Alexandrinus* tells us, whom *Phoronides* the *Poet* calls πατήρ ἁνθρώπων, *The Father of mankind*. This may be now the first way of corrupting the ancient *tradition*, by supposing all that was conveyed by it to have been acted among themselves. which may be imputed partly to their ignorance of the *state* of their ancient *times*, and partly to their *pride*, lest they should seem to come behind others in matters of *Antiquity*.

*Apollod. bibli-  
oth. l. i. p. 19.*

*Apud Cyril. c.  
Julian. lib. i.*

*Strom. l. i.*



2. Another fountain of *Heathen Mythology*, was the taking the *Idiom* of the *Oriental languages* in a proper sence. For whether we suppose the ancient *traditions* were conveyed to them in the ancient *Hebrew* by the *Felagiti*, or were delivered to them by the *Phœnicians*, or were fetched out of the *Scriptures* themselves (as some suppose, though im- probably of *Homer* and some ancient *Poets*) yet all these se- veral ways agreeing in this, that the *traditions* were *Ori- ental*, we thereby understand how much of their *Mythology* came by taking the *Hebrew* in a proper and literal sence with- out attending to the *Idiom* of the tongue. From hence *Bo- chartus* hath ingeniously fetched many *Heathen Fables*. Thus when *Noah* is said to be אִישׁ הָאֲדָמָה *Gen. 9. 20.* which in the *Idiom* of the *Hebrew* only signifies a *husband- man*, they took it in a proper sence for ὁ ἀνὴρ τῆς γῆς, and thence *Saturn* who was the same with *Noah* (as will appear afterwards) is made by *Mythologists* the husband of *Rhea* which was the same with the *Earth*. So the *Gyants* making war against *Heaven*, was only a *Poetical adumbration* of the design at the building of *Babel*, whose *top* in the *Scripture* is said to reach בְּשָׁמַיִם which in the *Hebrew* signifies only *Gen. 11. 4.* a great height; but to aggrandize the *Story*, was taken in the literal *interpretation* that they attempted *Heaven*. So when they are said to fight against the *Gods*, *Bochartus* thinks it might be taken from that phrase of *Nimrod*, that he was a mighty hunter יְהוּדָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה before the Lord we render it, but it sometimes signifies against the Lord. So what *Abydenus* *Apud Euseb.* saith of the *Gyants*, that they were ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἀνδρόγυντες, those *Præp. Evang. l.* that came out of the earth, is supposed to be taken from that *9.* phrase, *Gen. 10. 11.* מִן הָאֲרֶץ יָצָא, e terra ipsa exiit. But far more likely and probable is that which learned men are generally agreed in concerning *Bacchus* his being born of *Ju- piter's thigh*, which is only an expression of that *Hebraism* יָצָא מִן הָאֲרֶץ wherein coming out of the thigh is a phrase for ordinary *Gen. 46. 6.* procreation.

3. A third way observable, is, the alteration of the names in the ancient *tradition*, and putting names of like importance to them in their own language. Thus *Jupiter* who was the same with *Cham*, was called Ζεὺς Ἰσίδωρ Ζέων, as חַם, from חָמַם *fervere, incalescere.* Ἀπὸ τῆς ἰσίδωρος ἀπὸ τῆς ἰσίδωρος ἰσίδωρος ἰσίδωρος  
A a a 2 Δία,

Phaleg l. i. cap.  
1.

Δία, saith *Herodotus*; him whom the *Greeks* call Ζεύς, the *Egyptians* call *Cham*. So *Japheth*, whose memory was preserved under *Neptune*, to whose portion the *Islands* in the *Sea* fell, was called by the *Greeks* Ποσειδών, which comes (saith *Bochartus*) from the *Punick* פשיט which signifies *large* and *broad*, which is the very importance of the *Hebrew* גָּדול, thence in allusion to the name, it is said, *Gen* 9. 27. גָּדַל לִיטָה אֱלֹהִים God shall enlarge *Japheth*. Thence the *Epithetes* of *Neptune* are ἐνυπέρθεος, ἐνυπόθεος, ἐνυμνείων, all equally alluding to the name *Japheth*. So Ἀπώλλων in the *Greek* is of the same importance with the *Heb.* שַׁדַּי, *Dæmon*, from שָׁדַד to *destroy*. Thence we read, *Deut.* 32. 17. they sacrificed לַשְׁדִּימִים, to *Devils*. *Canaan* in the *Hebrew* signifies a *Merchant*; thence *Mercury*, under whom the memory of *Canaan* the son of *Cham* was preserved is derived, by many from מָכַר to *sell*. *Ceres* which was the *Inventress* of *Agriculture*, from גָּרַשׁ which imports *bread-corn*. These and many others are produced by *Vossius*, *Heinsius*, *Bochartus* and other learned men, which I insist not on, because my design is only *dignos ad fontes intendere*, and to make these handsome and probable conjectures, argumentative to our purpose, and to bind up those loose and scattering observations into some order and method, in which they have not yet appeared, nor been improved to that end which I make use of them for.

4 When the *Oriental phrases* were ambiguous and equivocal, they omitted that sense which was plain and obvious, and took that which was more strange and fabulous. From hence the learned *Bochartus* hath fetched the *Fable* of the *golden Fleece*, which was nothing else but the robbing the *Treasury* of the *King* of *Colchis*; but it was disguised under the name of the *golden Fleece*, because the *Syriack word* אֶלֶף signifies both a *Fleece* and a *Treasury*. So the *Bulls* and *Dragons* which kept it, were nothing but the *walls* and *brass gates*; for שׁוֹר, signifies both a *Bull* and a *Wall*, and נְחָשׁ *Brass*, and a *Dragon*. And so the *Fable* of the *Brass-Bull* in the mountain *Atabyrius* which foretold calamities, arose from the equivocation of the *Phœnician* or *Hebrew* words אֶלֶף מְנַחֵשׁ which signify either *Doctor Augur*, or *bos ex ære*, a foreteller of events or a *brazen Bull*. From the like Ambiguity of the word אֶלֶף אֶלֶף arose the *Fable* of *Jupiter* stealing *Europa* in the



the form of a *Bull*, because the word either signifies a *Ship* in which he conveyed her way, or a *Bull*; or it may be the *Ship* had *Ἰσχυρὸν βοῦς*, as the ship *St. Paul* sailed in had *Castor* and *Pollux*, it being usual to call their *Ships* by the names of the signs they carried. From the like *equivocation* in the *Phœnician* language doth *Bockartus* fetch many other *Heathen Fables*, in his excellent piece *de Phœnicum Colonia*, as particularly that of *Arethusa* coming from *Alpheus*, which was from *אֶרֶץ* a *Ship*, because it was not far from an *Excellent Haven*. And so he makes the *Chimæra* to be more than a mere *ens rationis*; for he takes the *Chimæra* which *Bellerophon* conquered, to be only the people of *Solymi* under the three Generals, *Aryus*, *Trosibis*, and *Arsalus*; *אֶרֶץ* that signifies a *Lion*; *Trosibis* was *רֹאשׁ דְּרוֹיָא* the head of a *Serpent*: *Arsalus* was *אֶרֶץ יָלֵד* a young kid, and so the *Chimæra* consisted of the form of a *Lion*, a *Goat*, and a *Serpent*. Thus we see how easie a matter it was to advance the *Heathen Mythology* from the *equivocation* of the *Oriental Languages*, in which their *Traditions* were conveyed to them.

*Canaan. l. 1. cap. 28.*

*Canaan. l. 1. c. 6.*

But yet a more prolifick principle of *Mythology* was by attributing the actions of several persons to one who was the first or the chief of them. Thus it was in the stories of *Jupiter*, *Neptune*, *Mars*, *Mercury*, *Minerva*, *Juno*, *Bacchus* and *Hercules*, which were a collection of the actions done by a multitude of persons, which were all attributed to one person. So *Vossius* tells us before the time of the *Trojan Wars*, most of their *Kings*, who were renowned and powerful, were called *Joves*. Now when the actions of all these are attributed to one *Jupiter* of *Creet*, they must needs swell his story up with abundance of *Fables*. *Vossius* hath taken a great deal of pains to digest in an historical manner the stories of the several *Jupiters*, whereof he reckons two *Argives*, a third the Father of *Hercules*, a fourth a *King* of *Phrygia*, and two more of *Creet*: to one of which, without any distinction, the actions of all the rest were ascribed, and who was worshipped under the name of *Jupiter*. And so besides the ancient *Neptune*, who was the same with *Japhet*, they sometimes understood any *Insular Prince*, or one that had great power at *Sea*; but besides these, there were two famous *Nepitunes* among the

*Seet. 6.*  
5.

*De Idol. l. 1.*

the *Greeks*, the one of *Athens*, the other the *builder* of the walls of *Troy* : now the stories of all these being mixed together, must needs make a strange *confusion*. So for *Mars*, besides that ancient one they had by the *Oriental tradition*, they had a *Spartan*, *Thracian*, and *Arcadian Mars*. What abundance of *Mercuries* are we told of by *Tully* ? and of no less than five *Minerva's* ? Every angry, scornful, jealous *Queen* would fill up the *Fables* of *Juno*, who was equally claimed by the *Argives* and *Samians*. What contests were there between the *Greeks* and *Egyptians* concerning the Country of *Bacchus*, or *Liber Pater*, whose story was made up of many patches of the *Oriental story*, as will appear afterwards. The same may be said of *Hercules*. Now what a strange way was this to increase the number of *Fables* ? when they had one whose memory was anciently preserved among them, they attributed the *actions* of all such to him, who came near him in that which his memory was most remarkable for : And in those things which they did retain of the *Eastern tradition*, it was an usual thing to confound persons, places and actions together. So the story of *Enoch* and *Methuselah* is joyned together by *Stephanus de Urbibus*, under the name of *Ανναθ*, who is there said to live above 300 years (which agrees with *Enoch* as the name doth) and that at his death the world should be destroyed by a *Flood* ; which agrees with *Methuselah*. So *Abraham* by *Orpheus* is called *μωυσαῖος*, which belongs to *Isaac* his Son ; so the actions of *Nimrod*, *Ninus* and *Cham*, are confounded together in their *Mythology*. By these several ways now we understand how the *original tradition* was by degrees corrupted and altered in the *Heathen Mythology*.

Seet. 7.

I come now to the *footsteps* of *Scripture-history* which notwithstanding these *corruptions*, may be discerned in the *Heathen Mythology*, which I shall methodically enquire after according to the *series* of *Scripture-history*. That the names given to God in Scripture were preserved among the *Phœnicians*, appears sufficiently by the remainders of the *Phœnician Theology*, translated by *Philo Byblius* out of *Sanchoniathon* ; wherein we read of the God *Ιω*, which hath the same letters with *יהוה*, besides which there we meet with *ελδν*, the same with *עליון* the most High, and *Ιαθ*, which is *אלהים* the strong God ;  
Beelsaman,

Cicero l. 3. de  
Natur. D.

Steph. P. \*Av-  
vaxθ.

V. Scaliger. not.  
in fr. Græc.  
Selden. de Diis  
Syris.  
Bochart. Cana.  
l. 2. c. 2.



*Beelſaman*, which is, *בעל שמן* the God of Heaven, and *Ελωειμ*, the very name of God used in the beginning of *Genesis* so often. Besides, in those fragments we have express mention of the *Chaos*, and the evening following it, or the darkness on the face of the Deep; the Creation of Angels under the *ζωφασμιν*, *צוכה שמים* those beings which contemplate the Heavens: and the Creation of mankind *ἐν τῇ κόλπῃ ἀνέμῳ*, i. e. *קול פי יוה* faith *Bochartus*, the voice of the mouth of God, which is by God's word and inspiration, when it is expressed that God said, *Let us make man*, and that he breathed into him the breath of life. After we read of *γενῆσθαι* and *αὐτόχθον*, which properly agree to *Adam*, who was made out of the Earth. *Vossius* conceives that the memory of *Adam* was preserved among the old Germans, of whom *Tacitus* speaks, *Celebrant antiquis carminibus Tuistonem Deum terra editum, & filium Mannum, originem gentis, conditoresque*. Either by *Tuisto* *Adam* is understood, who was formed of the Earth, and by *Mannus*, *Noah*: or by *Tuisto* God may be understood, and by *Mannus*, *Adam*; to which conjecture may be added further that the same Author reports that some of the Germans sacrificed to *Isis*, which *Vossius* likewise conceives to be a remainder of the Hebrew *Ischa*. And so among the Egyptians it is with like probability conceived that *Adam* and *Ischa* were preserved under *Osiris* and *Isis*, as they were historically taken. In *Cilicia*, the City *Adana* is thought to have some remainder of the name of *Adam*; for the Greeks had no termination in *M*, therefore for *Adam* they pronounced it *Adan*, and that from *Ἀδανός*, and so the City *Adana*: Now that *Ἀδανός*, by *Stephanus de Urbibus*, is said to be the Son of Heaven and Earth. *Ἐστὶ δὲ Ἀδανὸς υἱὸς καὶ οὐρανόθεν πάντες*. This *Adanus*, he tells us, was otherwise called *Κεῖν* or *Saturn*, under whom the Greeks preserved the memory of *Adam*; for *Diodorus*, *Thallus*, *Cassius*, *Severus*, and *Cornelius Nepos*, do all (as *Tertullian* faith) confess *Saturn* to have been a man; and according to their Fables, he must have been the first of men. *Saturn* was the Son of Heaven and Earth, and so was *Adam*: he taught men husbandry; and was not *Adam* the first that tilled the ground? Besides, that power which *Saturn* had, and was deposed from, doth fitly set out the Dominion man had in the Golden Age

*De Idol. l. i.*

*cap. 38.*

*Tacit. de morib.*

*German.*

*Stephanus V.*

*Ἀδαν.*

*Apolog. c. 10.*

of Innocency which he lost by his own folly. And *Adam's* hiding himself from the presence of the *Lord*, gave occasion to the name of *Saturn*, from *Satar* to hide. We find something of *Cain* preserved in the *Phœnician antiquities*, under the name of *Ἀγένης* or *Ἀγένης*, the first Conuntryman or Husbandman, who with his brother *Ἀγένης* built houses, and the first foundation of a City is attributed to *Cain*: And on that account *Vossius* conjectures that the memory of *Cain's* wife was preserved under *Vesta*, both because she was the daughter of *Saturn*, i. e. of *Adam*, and that she is said τὴν οἰκὴν κατασκευὴν εὐρεῖν, to find out first the way of building houses. That *Tubal-Cain* gave first occasion to the name and worship of *Vulcan*, hath been very probably conceived, both from the very great affinity of the names, and that *Tubal-Cain* is expressly mentioned to be an Instructor of every Artificer in brass and iron; and as near relation as *Apollo* had to *Vulcan*, *Jubal* had to *Tubal-Cain*, who was the Inventer of Musick, or the Father of all such as handle the Harp and Organ; which the Greeks attribute to *Apollo*. And if that be true which *Genebrand* and others ascribe to *Naamah*, the sister of *Jubal* and *Tubal-Cain*, viz. that she was the inventor of Spinning and Weaving, then may she come in for *Minerva*. Thus we see there were some, though but obscure foot-steps preserved, even of that part of Scripture-history which preceeded the Flood.

Sc. 8.

The memory of the Deluge it self we have already found to be preserved in the *Heathen Mythology*; we come therefore to *Noah* and his posterity. Many parcels of *Noah's* memory were preserved in the scattered fragments of many Fables, under, *Saturn*, *Janus*, *Prometheus*, and *Bacchus*. *Bechartus* insists on no fewer than 14 Parallels between *Noah* and the *Heathen Saturn*, which he saith are so plain, that there is no doubt but under *Saturn*, *Noah* was understood in the *Heathen Mythology*. *Saturn* was said to be the common Parent of Mankind, so was *Noah*; *Saturn* was a just King, *Noah* not only righteous himself, but a Preacher of righteousness; The golden Age of *Saturn* was between *Noah* and the dispersion of Nations. In *Noah's* time all mankind had but one Language, which the *Heathens* extend under *Saturn*, both to men and beasts: The plantation of Vines attributed to *Saturn* by the *Heathens*, as to *Noah* by the Scriptures: The Law of *Saturn* mentioned

Voss. de Idol. l. 1.

c. 17.

Gen. 4. 22.

4. 21.

Phaleg. l. 1. c. 1.



mentioned by the *Poets*, that none should see the nakedness of the *Gods* without *punishment*, seems to respect the *fact* and *curse* of *Cham*, in reference to *Noah*. *Saturn* and *Rhea*, and those with them are said to be born of *Thetis*, or the *Ocean*, which plainly alludes to *Noah* and his companies escaping the *Flood*; thence a *Ship* was the *symbol* of *Saturn*; and that *Saturn* devoured all his *children*, seems to be nothing else but the *destruction* of the *old world* by *Noah's flood*. And not only under *Saturn*, but under *Prometheus* too, was *Noah's memory* preserved. *Diodorus* speaks of the great *flood* under *Prometheus*; *Biblioth. l. 1.* and *Prometheus* implies one that hath *forecast* and *wisdom*, such as *Noah* had, whereby he foretold the *flood*, and was saved in it, when others were *Epimetheus's*, that had not wit to prevent their own *destruction*.

And no wonder if *Prometheus* were *Noah*, that the forming *mankind* was attributed to him, when the world was peopled from him. *Herodotus* his saying that *Asia* was *Prometheus* his *wife*, might relate to the *Countrey* *Noah* lived in, and our *propagation* from thence. Another part of *Noah's memory* was preserved under *Fanus*; the name of *Fanus* is most probably derived from פִּנּוּ, because of *Noah's planting a Vine*, and *Fanus* was called *Conferuius*, saith *Macrobius*, à *conserendo*, hoc *V. Mayer. Philest.* à *propagine generis humani, quæ Fano autore conseritur*; *Isid. sacr. p. 2.* now to whom can this be so properly applied as to *Noah* from *Gen. 5.* whom *mankind* was propagated? and *Fanus* his being *bifrons* or looking *πρὸς αὐτὸ καὶ ὀπίσσω*, *forward and backward*, is not so fit an emblem of any thing as of *Noah's seeing* those two ages before and after the *flood*. And it is further observable which *Plutarch* speaks of in his *Roman questions*, that the ancient *coins* had on one side the image of *Fanus* with his two *faces*, on the other *πλοῖς πρῶταν ἢ πρῶτον ἐννεχασσάμενον*, *the fore or hinder part of the ship*, by which the *memory* of the *Ark* of *Noah* seems to have been preserved. Thus we see what *Analogy* there is in the story of *Fanus* with that of *Noah*: not that I give credit to those *fooleries* which tell us of *Noah's coming* from *Palæstine* with his son *Japhet* into *Italy* and *planting Colonies* there, for which we are beholding to the *spurious Etruscan Antiquities*; but all that I assert is, that the story of *Noah* might be preserved in the *eldest Colonies*, though disguised under other *names*, as here in the case of *Fanus*.

Biblioth.

Philostr. c. 4.

Sect. 9.

Voss. de Idol.  
l. 1. c. 18.  
Boch. Phaleg.  
l. 1. c. 1. cap. 2.

De Idol. l. 1.  
c. 16.

And on the same account that the name of *Janus* is attributed to *Noah*, some likewise believe him to have been the most ancient *Bacchus*, who was according to *Diodorus* εὐγενής & ἀμύνης, the first planter of Vines and instructor of men in making Wines ; and besides, *Bacchus* his being twice born seems only an adumbration of *Noah*'s preservation after the flood, which might be accounted a second nativity when the rest of the world was destroyed ; and withall *Philostratus* in the life of *Apollonius* relates that the ancient Indian *Bacchus* came thither out of *Assyria*, which yet more fully agrees with *Noah*. So that from these scattered members of *Hippolytus* and these broken fragments of traditions, we may gather almost an entire history of all the passages concerning *Noah*.

As the story of *Saturn* and *Noah* do much agree, so the three sons of *Noah* and those of *Saturn*, *Jupiter*, *Neptune*, and *Pluto* have their peculiar resemblances to each other. Of which *Vossius* and *Bochartus* have largely spoken, and we have touched on already. Besides which this latter Author hath carried the parallel lower, and finds *Canaan* the son of *Cham*, the same with *Mercury* the son of *Jupiter* ; as it was the curse of *Canaan* to be a servant of servants, so *Mercury* is always described under servile employments ; his wings seem to be the ships of the *Phœnicians* who were derived from *Canaan*, and his being the God of trade, noting the great Merchandize of the *Phœnicians*, and *Mercury*'s thievery noting the Pyracies, or at least the subtilty and craft of the *Phœnicians* ; he was the Father of eloquence and *Astronomy*, as letters and *Astronomy* came from the *Phœnicians* into Greece. The same Author parallels *Nimrod* and *Bacchus*, and *Magog* and *Prometheus* together. The name of *Bacchus* is but a light variation of בר כוש, *Bar-chus*, as *Nimrod* was the son of *Chus*, and *Bacchus* is called *Nebrodes* by the Greeks, which is the very name of *Nimrod* among them, and *Bacchus* is called Ζωργεύς, which excellently interprets *Nimrod*'s being a mighty hunter. *Bacchus* his expeditions into *India* were the attempts of *Nimrod* and the *Assyrian* Emperors. On which account *Vossius* makes *Nimrod* or *Belus* the most ancient *Mars* ; for *Hesiæus* *Milesius* speaks of *Enyalios* which is *Mars*, his being in *Sennaar* of *Babylonia*. That the memory of *Magog* was preserved under *Prometheus*, these things make it probable, that *Magog* was

was



was the son of *Japhet*, as *Prometheus* of *Iapetus*, and that the posterity of *Magog* was placed about *Caucasus*, where *Prometheus* is feigned to lie: and the eating of *Prometheus* his heart, is only an interpretation of *גג* which applied to the heart signifies to waste away and be consumed. Thus far *Bochartus*.

The *Phœnician antiquities* seem to have preserved the memory of *Abraham's* sacrificing his son *Isaac*, by that place which *Eusebius* produceth out of *Porphyrie's* book concerning the *Jews*; where he relates, how *Saturn* whom the *Phœnicians* call *Israel*, when he reigned in those parts, and had an only son called *Jeoud*, of a nymph called *Anobret*, being under some great calamity, did sacrifice that son of his being cloathed with a royal habit. Here we have a royal person called *Israel*; and that *Abraham* should be accounted a *King* in those elder times, is nothing strange, considering his wealth, and what petty royalities there were in those times. But *Grotius*, and from him *Vossius*, do not think that *Abraham* was here called *Israel*, but that the transcriber of *Eusebius* meeting with *יִל* supposed it to be a contraction of *יִשְׂרָאֵל*, and so writ it at length, it must be acknowledged that *יִל* is used in the *Phœnician Theology* for *Saturn*, but yet the circumstances of the story make the ordinary reading not improbable; neither is it strange, that *Abraham* should be called by the name of the People which he was the Progenitor of. That *Isaac* should be meant by his only son called *Jeoud* is most likely; for when God bids *Abraham* go sacrifice him, he saith, Take thy son *יִדִּד*, thy onely son; *Jeuid* is the same with the *Phœnician Jeoud*. That *Sara* is meant by *Anobret*, the original of the name implies, which is as *Bochartus* derives it *עִבְרָה*, *Annobereft*, that is, ex gratia concipiens, which the *Apostle* explains. Through faith *Sara* her self received strength to conceive seed. Now all the difference is, that which was only designed and intended by *Abraham*, was believed by the *Phœnicians* as really done, that it might be as a precedent to them for their *εὐθετοδοσίαν*, sacrificing of men, a thing so much in use among the *Phœnicians*, and all the Colonies derived from them, as many learned men have at large shewed. But besides this, there are particular testimonies concerning *Abraham*, his age, wisdom and knowledge, his coming out of *Chaldæa*, and the propagation of knowledge from him among the *Chaldæans*, *Phœnicians*, and

*V. Scaliger. not. ad fr. Gr.*

*Grot. in Deut. c. 18. v. 10. Voss. de Idol. l. 1. c. 18.*

*Gen. 22. 1.*

*De Phœnic. col. l. 2. c. 2. Heb. 11. 11.*

*Joseph. Antiq.* Egyptians, are extant out of *Berosus*, *Eupolemus*, and others in *Josephus* and *Eusebius*, and from thence transcribed by many learned men, which on that account I forbear transcribing, as being common and obvious.

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Some have not improbably conjectured, that the memory of *Jacob's* long peregrination, and service with his *Uncle Laban*, was preserved under the story of *Apollo's* banishment and being a *Shepherd* under *Admetus*. For *Callimachus* reports that *Love* was the cause of *Apollo's* travails, as it was of *Jacob's*, and withall mentions a strange increase of *Cattel* under *Apollo's* care, answerable to what the *Scripture* reports concerning *Jacob*. But it is more certain, that the memory

*Callimach.*  
*Hymn. in Apollo.*

Gen. 28. 18.

of *Jacob's* setting up the stone he had rested on for a pillar, and pouring oyl upon it, and calling the place *Bethel*, was preserved under the anointed stones which the *Phœnicians* from *Bethel* called *Βαίπλια*, as hath been frequently observed by learned men, from whence came the custom of anointing stones among the *Heathens*, of which so very many have largely discoursed. Thence the Proverb of a superstitious man, *πάντα λίθον λιπαρὸν προσκυνεῖ*, which *Arnobius* calls *lubricatum lapidem* & *ex olivi unguine sordidatum*. It seems the anointing the stones with oyl, was then the symbol of the consecration of them. The name *Βαίπλια* for such a stone occurs in *Hezychius*, the *Greek Etymologist*, *Damascius* in *Photius*, and others. That the memory of *Joseph* in *Egypt* was preserved under the *Egyptian Apis*, hath been shewed with a great deal of probability by the learned *Vossius*, in his often cited piece of *Idolatry*, from the testimonies of *Julius Maternus*, *Rufinus*, and *Suidas*; and from these three arguments. 1. The greatness of the benefit which the *Egyptians* received by *Joseph*; which was of that nature that it could not easily be forgot, and that no symbol was so proper to set it out as the *Egyptian Apis*; because the famine was portended by lean Kine, and the plenty by fat; and *Minucius* at *Rome*, for relieving the People in a time of famine, had a statue of a golden Bull erected to his memory. 2. The *Egyptians* were not backward to testify their respect to *Joseph*, as appears by *Pharaoh's* rewarding him; now it was the custom of the *Egyptians* to preserve the memories of their great Benefactors by some symbols to posterity; which were at first intended only for a

*Scal. not. in fr.*  
*Gr. Bochart.*  
*Can. l. 2. c. 2.*  
*Seld. de Diis Syris.*  
*V. Heins. in Clem. Alex. Str. 7.*  
*Casaubon. ad Theoph. p. 129.*  
*Herald. ad Arnob. l. 1.*  
*Colvium ad Apul. Florid.*  
*Ouzel. & Elmenhorst ad Minuc. de Idolol. l. 1. c. 29.*



civil use, although they were after abused to *Superstition* and *Idolatry*. 3. From the names of *Apis* and *Serapis*. *Apis* he conceives to be the sacred name of *Joseph* among the *Egyptians*, and is as much as אב, *Father*; so *Joseph* himself saith, Gen. 45. 8. he was as a *Father* to *Pharaoh*. And *Serapis*, as *Rufinus* and *Suidas* both tell us, had a *bushe* upon his head, and *Serapis* is probably derived from שר, *Sor*, which signifies a *Bull*, and *Apis*. So that by this means the story of *Joseph* is attested by the *Egyptians superstitions*, of which they can give no account so likely as this is.

Many things concerning *Moses* are preserved in the story of *Bacchus*, not that from thence we are to concluded that *Moses* was the *Bacchus* of the *Greeks*, as *Vossius* thinks, but they took several parts of the *Eastern traditions* concerning him, which they might have from the *Phœnicians* who came with *Cadmus* into *Greece*, while the memory of *Moses* was yet fresh among the *Canaanites*. In the story of *Bacchus*, as *Vossius* ob- De Idol. l. 1. c. 30. serves, it is expressly said, that he was born in *Egypt*, and that soon after his birth he was put in an *Ark*, and exposed to the *River*, which tradition was preserved among the *Brasiliæ* of *Laconica*: and *Bacchus* in *Orpheus* is called Μῑος, and by *Plutarch de Iside & Osiride*, Παλῆστινος: and he is called Βιμύτιος which agrees to *Moses*, who, besides his own Mother, was adopted by *Pharaoh's daughter*: *Bacchus* was likewise commended for his beauty as *Moses* was, and was said to be educated in a Mount of *Arabia* called *Nysa*, which agrees with *Moses* his residence in *Arabia* forty years; so *Plutarch* mentions οὐχὶς Διονύσου the banishments of *Bacchus*, and *Nonnus* mentions *Bacchus* his flight into the *Red-sea*: who likewise mentions his battles in *Arabia* and with the neighbouring *Princes* there. *Diodorus* saith, that *Bacchus* his Army had not only men but women in it; which is most true of the company which *Moses* led. *Orpheus* calls *Bacchus* θεσμοφύεον, and attributes to him δῖπλακα θεσμών, whereby we understand *Moses* his being a *Legislator*, and that he delivered the *Law* in two *Tables*. *Moses* his fetching water out of a rock with his rod, is preserved in the *Orgia* of *Bacchus*, in which *Euripides* relates that *Agave* and the rest of the *Bacchæ* celebrating the *Orgia*, one of them touched a rock, and the water came out: and in the same *Orgia* *Euripides* reports how they were wont to

Dion. l. 20.

Bibl. l. 4.

Canaan. l. i.  
c. 18.

De Idol. l. i.  
c. 26. p. 188.  
p. 169.

De Deor. Con.  
Eliacôn. 2.  
p. 203.

covern their heads with *Serpents*, probably in memory of the cure of the fiery *Serpents* in the Wilderness. A *dog* is made the companion of *Bacchus*, which is the signification of *Caleb*, who so faithfully adhered to *Moses*. To these and some other circumstances insisted on by *Vossius*, *Bochartus* adds two more very considerable ones; which are, that *Nonnus* reports of *Bacchus* that he touched the two rivers *Orontes* and *Hydaspes* with his *thyrsus*, or rod, and that the rivers dried, and he passed through them: and that his *Ivy-staff* being thrown upon the ground, crept up and down like a *Serpent*, and that the *Indians* were in darkness while the *Bacchæ* enjoyed light; which circumstances considered will make every one that hath judgment say as *Bochartus* doth; *ex mirabili illo consensu vel cæcis apparebit priscos fabularum architectos è scriptoribus sacris multa esse mutuatos*. From this wonderfull agreement of *Heathen Mythology* with the *Scriptures*, it cannot but appear that one is a corruption of the other. That the memory of *Joshua* and *Sampson* was preserved under *Hercules Tyrimus*, is made likewise very probable from several circumstances of the stories. Others have deduced the many rites of *Heathen worship* from those used in the *Tabernacle* among the *Jews*. Several others might be insisted on, as the *Parallel* between *Og* and *Typho*, and between the old *Silenus* and *Balaam*, both noted for their skill in divination, both taken by the water, Num. 22. 5. both noted for riding on an *Ass*: ἐπὶ ὄνυ τὰ πολλὰ ὀχέμεν, saith *Lucian* of the old *Silenus*; and that which makes it yet more probable, is that of *Pausanias*, ἐν δὲ τῇ Ἐβραίων γλώσσῃ Σιλῶν μῦθμα, which some learned men have been much puzzled to find out the truth of; and this conjecture which I here propound, may pass at least for a probable account of it; but I shall no longer insist on these things, having, I suppose, done what is sufficient to our purpose, which is, to make it appear what footsteps there are of the truth of *Scripture-history* amidst all the corruptions of *Heathen Mythology*.



## C H A P. VI.

## Of the Excellency of the Scriptures.

Concerning matters of pure divine revelation in Scripture: the terms of Salvation only contained therein. The ground of the disesteem of the Scripture is tacite unbelief. The Excellency of the Scriptures manifested as to the matters which God hath revealed therein. The Excellency of the discoveries of God's nature which are in Scripture. Of the goodness and love of God in Christ. The suitableness of those discoveries of God to our natural notions of a Deity. The necessity of God's making known himself to us in order to the regulating our conceptions of him. The Scriptures give the fullest account of the state of men's souls, and the corruptions which are in them. The only way of pleasing God discovered in Scriptures. The Scriptures contain matters of greatest mysteriousness, and most universal satisfaction to men's minds. The Excellency of the manner wherein things are revealed in Scriptures, in regard of clearness, authority, purity, uniformity, and persuasiveness. The Excellency of the Scriptures as a rule of life. The nature of the duties of Religion and the reasonableness of them. The greatness of the encouragements to Religion contained in the Scriptures. The great Excellency of the Scriptures, as containing in them the Covenant of Grace in order to man's Salvation.

HAVING thus largely proved the Truth of all those passages of sacred Scripture which concern the history of the first ages of the world, by all those arguments which a subject of that nature is capable of, the only thing left in order to our full proving the Divinity of the Scriptures, is, the consideration of those matters contained in it, which are in an especial manner said to be of Divine Revelation. For those historical passages, though we believe them as contained in the Scripture, to have been Divinely inspired as well as others: yet they are such things as supposing no Divine Revelation, might have been known sufficiently to the world, had

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had not men been wanting to themselves as to the care and means of preserving them ; but those *matters* which I now come to discourse of , are of a more *sublime* and *transcendent* nature , such as it had been impossible for the *minds* of *men* to reach , had they not been immediately discovered by *God* himself. And those are the *terms* and *conditions* on which the Soul of man may upon good grounds expect an *eternal happiness* , which we assert the *Book of Scriptures* to be the only *authentick* and *infallible* records of. Men might by the *improvements* of reason and the *sagacity* of their minds discover much , not only of the *lapsed condition* of their *souls* , and the necessity of a *purgation* of them , in order to their *felicity* , but might in the general know what things are pleasing and acceptable to the *Divine Nature* , from those *differences* of good and evil which are unalterably fixed in the things themselves ; but which way to obtain any certainty of the *remission* of *sins* , to recover the *Grace* and *Favour* of *God* , to enjoy perfect *tranquillity* and *peace* of *conscience* , to be able to please *God* in things agreeable to his *Will* , and by these to be assured of *eternal bliss* , had been impossible for men to have ever found , had not *God* himself been graciously pleased to reveal them to us. Men might still have bewildred themselves in following the *ignes fatui* of their own *imagination*s , and hunting up and down the world for a path which leads to *Heaven* , but could have found none , unless *God* himself taking pity of the wandrings of men had been pleased to hang out a *light* from *Heaven* to direct them in their way thither , and by this *Pharos* of *Divine Revelation* to direct them so to *steer* their course , as to escape *splitting* themselves on the *rocks* of open impieties , or being *swallowed* up in the *quick-sands* of terrene delights. Neither doth he shew them only what *shelves* and *rocks* they must escape , but what particular *course* they must *steer* , what *star* they must have in their *eye* , what *compass* they must observe , what *winds* and *gales* they must expect and pray for , if they would at last arrive at *eternal bliss*. *Eternal bliss* ! What more could a *God* of infinite goodness promise , or the *soul* of *man* ever wish for ? A *Reward* to such who are so far from *deserving* , that they are still *provoking* ; *Glory*

to



to such who are more apt to be *ashamed* of their duties, than of their offences; but that it should not only be a *glorious reward*, but *eternal* too, is that which though it infinitely *transcend* the *deserts* of the *receivers*, yet it highly discovers the *infinite goodness* of the *Giver*. But when we not only know that there is so rich a *mine* of inestimable *treasures*, but if the *owner* of it undertakes to shew us the way to it, and gives us certain and infallible directions how to come to the full *possession* of it, how much are we in *love* with *misery*, and do we *court* our own *ruin*, if we neglect to hearken to his *directions*, and *observe* his *commands*!

This is that we are now undertaking to make good concerning the *Scriptures*, that these alone contain those *sacred discoveries* by which the *souls* of men may come at last to enjoy a compleat and *eternal happiness*. One would think there could be nothing more needless in the world than to bid men regard their own *welfare*, and to *seek* to be *happy*; yet whoever casts his *eye* into the world, will find no counsel so little *hearkned* to as this, nor any thing which is more generally looked on as a matter *trivial* and *impertinent*. Which cannot arise but from one of these two *grounds*, that either they think it no great *wisdom* to let go their present hold as to the *good things* of this *world*, for that which they secretly question whether they shall ever *live* to *see* or no; or else that their *minds* are in *suspense*, whether they be not sent on a *Guiana voyage* to *Heaven*, whether the *certainty* of it be yet fully discovered, or the *instructions* which are given be such as may infallibly conduct them thither. The first, though it hath the *advantage* of *sense*, *fruition*, *delight*, and further *expectation*; yet to a *rational* person who seriously *reflects* on himself, and sums up what (after all his troubles and *disquietments* in the procuring, his *cares* in keeping, his *disappointments* in his *expectations*, his *fears* of losing what he doth enjoy, and that *vexation* of *spirit* which attends all these) he hath gained of true *contentment* to his mind, can never certainly believe that ever these *things* were intended for his *happiness*. For is it possible that the *soul* of man should ever enjoy its full and compleat *happiness* in this world, when nothing is able to make it *happy*, but what is

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most *suitable* to its *nature*, able to fill up its large *capacity*, and *commensurate* with its *duration* : but in this life the matter of mens greatest *delights* is strangely unsuitable to the nature of our *rational beings*, the *measure* of them too short for our vast *desires* to *stretch* themselves upon ; the *proportion* too *scant* and *narrow* to run *parallel* with *immortality*. It must be then only a *Supream*, *Infinite* and *Eternal Being*, which by the free *communications* of his *bounty* and *goodness* can fix and satiate the souls desires, and by the constant flowings forth of his uninterrupted streams of favour will always keep up desire, and yet always satisfy it : One whose *goodness* can only be felt by some transient *touches* here, whose *love* can be seen but as through a *lattice*, whose constant presence may be rather wished for than enjoyed, who hath reserved the full sight and fruition of himself to that future *state* when all these dark *veils* shall be done way, and the *soul* shall be continually *summing* her self under immediate *beams of light* and *love*. But how or in what way the *soul* of *man* in this degenerate condition should come to be partaker of so great a *happiness*, by the enjoyment of that *God* our natures are now at such a distance from, is the greatest and most important enquiry of humane nature ; and we continually see how *successless* and *unsatisfactory* the endeavours of those have been to themselves at last, who have sought for this *happiness* in a way of their own finding out ; The large *volume* of the *Creation*, wherein *God* hath described so much of his *wisdom* and *power*, is yet too dark and obscure, too short and imperfect to set forth to us the *way* which leads to eternal happiness. Unless then the same *God* who made mens *souls* at first, do shew them the way for their recovery ; as they are in a degenerate, so they will be in a desperate *condition* ; but the same *bounty* and *goodness* of *God*, which did at first display it self in giving being to mens *souls*, hath in a higher manner enlarged the discovery of it self, by making known the *way* whereby we may be taken into his *Grace* and *Favour* again.

Which



Which it now concerns us particularly to discover, thereby to make it appear that this *way* is of that peculiar excellency, that we may have from thence the greatest evidence, it could come from no other Author but God himself and doth tend to no other end but our eternal happiness. Now that incomparable excellency which is in the sacred Scriptures, will fully appear, if we consider the matters contained in them under this threefold capacity. 1. As matters of Divine Revelation. 2. As a rule of life. 3. As containing that Covenant of grace which relates to mans eternal happiness.

1. Consider the Scripture generally, as containing in it matters of divine revelation, and therein the excellency of the Scriptures appears in two things. 1. The matters which are revealed. 2. The manner wherein they are revealed.

1. The matters which are revealed in Scripture, may be considered these three ways. 1. As they are matters of the greatest weight and moment. 2. As matters of the greatest depth and mysteriousness. 3. As matters of the most universal satisfaction to the minds of men.

1. They are matters of the greatest moment and importance for men to know. The wisdom of men is most known by the weight of the things they speak; and therefore that wherein the wisdom of God is discovered, cannot contain any thing that is mean and trivial; they must be matters of the highest importance, which the Supreme Ruler of the world vouchsafes to speak to men concerning: And such we shall find the matters which God hath revealed in his word to be, which either concern the rectifying our apprehensions of his nature, or making known to men their state and condition, or discovering the way whereby to avoid eternal misery. Now which is there of these three, which supposing God to discover his mind to the world, it doth not highly become him to speak to men of?

1. What is there which doth more highly concern men to know than God himself? or what more glorious and excellent object could he discover than himself to the world? There is nothing certainly which should more commend the

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*Scriptures* to us, than that thereby we may grow more acquainted with *God* ; that we may know more of his *nature*, and all his *perfections*, and many of the great *reasons* of his actings in the world. We may by them understand with safety what the *eternal purposes* of *God* were as to the way of mans recovery by the *death* of his *Son* ; we may there see and understand the great *wisdom* of *God* ; not only in the *contrivance* of the *world*, and ordering of it, but in the *gradual revelations* of himself to his people, by what steps he trained up his *Church* till the *fullness of time was come* ; what his *aim* was in laying such a *load* of *Ceremonies* on his people of the *Jews* ; by what *steps* and *degrees* he made way for the full *revelation* of his *Will* to the *World* by speaking in these *last days* by his *Son*, after he had spoke at *sundry times* and *divers manners* by the *Prophets*, &c. unto the *Fathers*. In the *Scriptures* we read the most rich and admirable *discoveries* of *Divine goodness*, and all the ways and methods he useth in alluring sinners to himself, with what *Majesty* he *commands*, with what *condescention* he *intreats*, with what *importunity* he *wooes* men's souls to be reconciled to him, with what *favour* he *embraceth*, with what *tenderneſs* he *chastiseth*, with what *bowels* he *pitieth* those who have chosen him to be their *God* ! With what *power* he *supporteth*, with what *wisdom* he *directeth*, with what *cordials* he *refresheth* the souls of such who are *dejected* under the *sense* of his *displeasure*, and yet their *love* is *sincere* towards him ! With what profound *humility*, what holy *boldneſs*, what becoming *distance*, and yet what *restleſs importunity* do we therein find the *souls* of *God's* people addressing themselves to him in *prayer* ! With what *cheerfulness* do they *serve* him, with what *confidence* do they *trust* him, with what *resolution* do they *adhere* to him in all *streights* and *difficulties*, with what *patience* do they submit to his *Will* in their greatest extremities ! How *fearful* are they of *sinning* against *God*, how *careful* to please him, how *regardless* of *suffering*, when they must choose either that or *sinning*, how little apprehensive of mens *displeasure*, while they enjoy the favour of *God* ! Now all these things which are so fully and pathetically expressed in *Scripture*, do abundantly set forth to us the



the exuberancy and Pleonasm of God's grace and goodness towards his people, which makes them delight so much in him, and be so sensible of his displeasure. But above all other discoveries of God's goodness, his sending his Son into the world to die for sinners, is that which the Scripture sets forth with the greatest Life and Eloquence. By Eloquence, I mean not an artificial compofure of words, but the gravity, weight, and perswasiveneſs of the matter contained in them. And what can tend more to melt our frozen hearts into a current of thankful obedience to God, than the vigorous reflection of the beams of God's love through Jeſus Chriſt upon us! Was there ever ſo great an expreſſion of Love heard of! nay, was it poſſible to be imagined, that that God who perfectly hates ſin, ſhould himſelf offer the pardon of it, and ſend his Son into the world to ſecure it to the ſinner, who doth ſo heartily repent of his ſins, as to deny himſelf, and take up his croſs and follow Chriſt! Well might the Apoſtle ſay, *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acception,* 1 Tim. 1. 13. *that Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to ſave ſinners.* How dry and ſapleſs are all the voluminous diſcourſes of Philoſophers, compared with this Sentence! How jejune and unſatisfactory are all the diſcoveries they had of God and his goodneſs, in compariſon of what we have by the Goſpel of Chriſt! Well might Paul then ſay, *That he determined to know nothing but Chriſt and him crucified.* 1 Cor. 2. 2. *Chriſt crucified is the Library which triumphant ſouls will be ſtudying in to all Eternity.* This is the only Library which is the true *ταρῆνον τοῦ Χρίſτου*, that which cures the ſoul of all its maladies and diſtempers; other knowledge makes mens minds giddy and ſtuporous; this ſettles and compoſes them; other knowledge is apt to ſwell men into high conceits and opinions of themſelves; this brings them to the trueſt view of themſelves, and thereby to humility and ſobriety; Other knowledge leaves mens hearts as it found them; this alters them and makes them better. So transcendent an excellency is there in the knowledge of Chriſt crucified above the ſublimeſt ſpeculations in the world.

And is not this an ineſtimable benefit we enjoy by the Scripture, that therein we can read and converſe with all ſect. 3. theſe

these expressions of *God's love and goodness*, and that in his own *language*? Shall we admire and praise what we meet with in *Heathen Philosophers*, which is generous and handsome; and shall we not adore the infinite *fulness* of the *Scriptures*, which run over with continued *expressions* of that and a higher nature? What *folly* is it to magnifie those *lean kine*, the notions of *Philosophers*, and to contemn the *fat*, the *plenty* and *fulness* of the *Scriptures*? If there be not far more *valuable* and *excellent discoveries* of the *Divine Nature* and *Perfections*; if there be not far more *excellent directions* and *rules of practice* in the *sacred Scriptures*, than in the *sublimest* of all the *Philosophers*, then let us leave our *full ears*, and feed upon the *thin*. But certainly no *sober* and *rational spirit* that puts any value upon the *knowledge of God*, but on the same *account* that he doth prize the *discourses* of any *Philosophers* concerning *God*, he cannot but set a value of a far higher nature on the *word of God*. And as the *goodness* of *God* is thus discovered in *Scripture*, so is his *Justice* and *Holiness*: we have therein recorded the most remarkable *judgments* of *God* upon contumacious sinners, the severest *denunciations* of a *judgment to come* against all that live in sin, the exactest *precepts* of *holiness* in the world; and what can be desired more to discover the *Holiness* of *God*, than we find in *Scripture* concerning him? If therefore acquaintance with the *nature, perfections, designs* of so excellent a *Being* as *God* is, be a thing desirable to humane nature, we have the greatest cause to admire the *excellency* and adore the *fulness* of the *Scriptures* which give us so large, rational, and compleat account of the *Being* and *Attributes* of *God*. And which tends yet more to commend the *Scriptures* to us, those things which the *Scripture* doth most fully discover concerning *God*, do not at all contradict those *prime* and *common notions* which are in our *natures* concerning him, but do exceedingly advance and improve them. and tend the most to regulate our *conceptions* and *apprehensions* of *God*, that we may not miscarry therein, as otherwise men are apt to do. For it being natural to men so far to love *themselves*, as to set the greatest *value* upon those *excellencies* which they think themselves most masters of:  
thence



thence men came to be exceedingly mistaken in their apprehensions of a *Deity*, some attributing *one* thing as a *perfection*, another a *different* thing, according to their *humours* and *inclinations*. Thus imperious self-willed men are apt to cry up *God's* absolute power and dominion as his greatest *perfection*; easie and soft-spirited men his *patience* and *goodness*; severe and rigid men his *justice* and *severity*: every one according to his *humour* and *temper*, making his *God* of his own *complexion*: and not only so, but in things remote enough from being *perfections* at all; yet because they are such things as they prize and value, they suppose of necessity they must be in *God*, as is evident in the *Epicureans*: *ἀταεγξία*, by which they excluded *providence*, as hath been already observed. And withall considering how very difficult it is for one who really believes that *God* is of a *pure*, *just*, and *holy* nature, and that he hath grievously offended him by his sins, to believe that this *God* will pardon him upon true *repentance*: It is thence necessary that *God* should make known himself to the world, to prevent our *misconceptions* of his nature, and to assure a *suspicious*, because *guilty* creature, how ready he is to pardon *iniquity*, *transgression*, and *sin*, to such as unfeignedly repent of their *folies*, and return unto himself. Though the light of *nature* may dictate much to us of the *benignity* and *goodness* of the *Divine Nature*, yet it is hard to conceive that that should discover further than *God's* general *goodness* to such as please him: but no foundation can be gathered thence of his *readiness* to pardon *offenders*, which being an act of *grace*, must alone be discovered by his *Will*. I cannot think the *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars* are such *itinerant Preachers*, as to unfold unto us the whole *Counsel* and *Will* of *God* in reference to man's acceptance with *God* upon *repentance*. It is not every *Star* in the *firmament* can do that which the *Star* once did to the *wise men*, lead them unto *Christ*. The *Sun* in the *Heavens* is no *Parelius* to the *Sun* of *righteousness*. The best *Astronomer* will never find the *day-star* from on high in the rest of his number. What *St. Austin* said of *Tully's* works, is true of the whole *Volume* of the *Creation*, There are *admirable things* to be found in them: but the name of *Christ*

*Christ* is not legible there. The *work* of *Redemption* is not engraven on the *works* of *providence*; if it had, a particular divine revelation had been unnecessary, and the *Apostles* were sent on a needless errand, which the world had understood without their *Preaching*, viz. *That God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing to men their trespasses, and hath committed to them the Ministry of Reconciliation*. How was the word of reconciliation committed to them, if it were common to them with the whole frame of the world? and the *Apostle's* *Quare* elsewhere might have been easily answered, *How can men hear without a Preacher?* For then they might have known the way of *salvation*, without any special messengers sent to deliver it to them. I grant that *God's long-suffering* and *patience* is intended to lead men to repentance, and that some general collections might be made from providence of the placability of *God's nature*, and that *God* never left himself without a witness of his goodness in the world, being kind to the unthankful, and doing good, in giving rain and fruitful seasons. But though these things might sufficiently discover to such who were apprehensive of the guilt of sin, that *God* did not act according to his greatest severity, and thereby did give men encouragement to hearken out and enquire after the true way of being reconciled to *God*; yet all this amounts not to a firm foundation for faith as to the remission of sin, which doth suppose *God* himself publishing an act of grace and indemnity to the world, wherein he assures the pardon of sin to such as truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel. Now is not this an ineffimable advantage we enjoy by the *Scriptures*, that therein we understand what *God* himself hath discovered of his own nature and perfections, and of his readiness to pardon sin upon those gracious terms of Faith and Repentance, and that which necessarily follows from these two, hearty and sincere obedience?

2. The *Scriptures* give the most faithful representation of the state and condition of the soul of man. The world was almost lost in Disputes concerning the nature, condition, and immortality of the soul before divine revelation was made known to mankind by the Gospel of *Christ*; but life and immortality was brought to light by the Gospel, and the future state of

1 Cor. 5. 18,  
19.

Rom. 10. 14.

Act. 14. 14.  
Luk. 6. 35, 36.

Secl. 6.



of the soul of man, not discovered in an uncertain *Platonical* way, but with the greatest light and evidence from that God who hath the supreme disposal of souls, and therefore best knows and understands them. The *Scriptures* plainly and fully reveal a judgment to come, in which God will judge the secrets of all hearts, when every one must give an account of himself unto God, and God will call men to give an account of their stewardship here, of all the receipts they have had from him, and the expences they have been at, and the improvements they have made of the talents he put into their hands. So that the Gospel of Christ is the fullest instrument of discovery of the certainty of the future state of the soul, and the conditions which abide it, upon its being dislodged from the body. But this is not all which the Scripture discovers as to the state of the soul; for it is not only a *prospective-glass*, reaching to its future state, but it is the most faithfull *looking-glass*, to discover all the spots and deformities of the soul: And not only shews where they are, but whence they came, what their nature is, and whither they tend. The true Original of all that disorder and discomposure which is in the soul of man, is only fully and satisfactorily given us in the Word of God, as hath been already proved. The nature and working of this corruption in man, had never been so clearly manifested, had not the Law and Will of God been discovered to the World; that is the glass whereby we see the secret workings of those Bees in our hearts, the corruptions of our natures; that sets forth the folly of our imaginations, the unruliness of our passions, the distempers of our wills, and the abundant deceitfulness of our hearts. And it is hard for the most Elephantine sinner (one of the greatest magnitude) so to trouble these waters, as not therein to discover the greatness of his own deformities. But that which tends most to awaken the drowsie, senseless spirits of men, the Scripture doth most fully describe the tendency of corruption, that the wages of sin is death, and the issue of continuance in sin will be the everlasting misery of the soul, in a perpetual separation from the presence of God, and undergoing the lashes and severities of conscience to all eternity. What a great discovery is this of the faithfulness of God to

the World, that he suffers not men to *undo* themselves without letting them know of it before-hand, that they might avoid it! *God* seeks not to *entrap* men's Souls, nor doth he rejoyce in the *misery* and *ruine* of his *creatures*, but fully declares to them what the *consequence* and *issue* of their sinfull practices will be, assures them of a *judgment* to come, declares his own future *severity* against contumacious sinners, that they might not think themselves *surprized*, and that if they had known there had been so great *danger* in *sin*, they would never have been such *fools*, as for the sake of it to run into eternal misery. Now *God*, to prevent this, with the greatest *plainness* and *faithfulness* hath shewed men the *nature* and *danger* of all their *sins*, and asks them beforehand what they will doe in the end thereof; whether they are able to bear his *wrath*, and *wrestle* with *everlasting burnings*? if not, he bids them *bethink* themselves of what they have done already, and *repent*, and *amend* their *lives*, lest *iniquity* prove their *ruine*, and *destruction* overtake them, and that without *remedy*. Now if men have *cause* to *prize* and *value* a faithfull *Monitor*, one that tenders their good, and would prevent their ruine, we have cause exceedingly to prize and value the *Scriptures*, which give us the truest representation of the *state* and *condition* of our *souls*.

3. *The Scripture discovers to us the only way of pleasing God, and enjoying his favour.* That clearly reveals the way ( which man might have sought for to all eternity without particular revelation ) whereby sins may be pardoned, and whatever we doe may be *acceptable* unto *God*. It shews us that the ground of our acceptance with *God*, is through *Christ*, whom he hath made a *propitiation* for the *sins* of the *world*, and who alone is the *true and living way*, whereby we may draw near to *God* with a true heart, in full assurance of *faith*, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. Through *Christ* we understand the *terms* on which *God* will shew *favur* and *grace* to the *World*, and by him we have ground of a *παρρησία*, access with freedom and boldness unto *God*. On his account we may hope not only for *grace* to subdue our sins, resist temptations, conquer the devil and the world; but having fought this good fight and finished our course,

by



by patient continuance in well-doing, we may justly look for glory, honour, and immortality, and that crown of righteousness which is laid up for those who wait in faith, holiness, and humility, for the appearance of Christ from heaven. Now what things can there be of greater moment and importance for men to know, or God to reveal, than the nature of God, and our selves, the state and condition of our souls, the only way to avoid eternal misery, and enjoy everlasting bliss.

The Scriptures discover not only matters of importance, but of the greatest depth and mysteriousness. There are many wonderful things in the Law of God, things we may admire, but are never able to comprehend. Such are the eternal purposes and decrees of God, the doctrine of the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the manner of the operation of the Spirit of God on the souls of men, which are all things of great weight and moment for us to understand and believe that they are, and yet may be unsearchable to our reason, as to the particular manner of them. What certain ground our faith stands on as to these things hath been already shewed, and therefore I forbear insisting on them.

Sect. 7.

2.

Book 2. ch. 8.  
sect. 5, 6, 7.

The Scripture comprehends matters of the most universal satisfaction to the minds of men; though many things do much exceed our apprehensions, yet others are most suitable to the dictates of our nature. As Origen bid Celsus see, *ἐν τῇ πίστει ἡμῶν ἡ κοινὰς ἐννοίας ἀρχὴν συναρθεύοντα, μὴ ταῖς ἐννομίαις ἀκούσας ἢς λεγόμενον*, whether it was not the agreeableness of the principles of faith with the common notions of humane nature, which prevailed most upon all candid and ingenuous auditors of them. And therefore as Socrates said of Heraclitus his Books, What he understood was excellent, and therefore he supposed that which he did not understand was so too: so ought we to say of the Scriptures, If those things which are within our capacity be so suitable to our natures and reasons, those cannot contradict our reason which yet are above them. There are many things which the minds of men were sufficiently assured that they were, yet were to seek for satisfaction concerning them, which they could never have had without Divine Revelation. As

3.

C. Cels. lib. 3.  
p. 135.

the nature of true happiness, wherein it lay, and how to be obtained, which the *Philosophers* were so puzzled with, the *Scripture* gives us full satisfaction concerning it. True contentment under the troubles of life, which the *Scripture* only acquaints us with the true grounds of; and all the prescriptions of *Heathen Moralists* fall as much short of, as the directions of an *Empirick* doth of a wise and skilfull *Physician*. Avoiding the fears of death, which can alone be through a grounded expectation of a future state of happiness which death leads men to, which cannot be had but through the right understanding of the Word of God. Thus we see the excellency of the matters themselves contained in this revelation of the mind of God to the world.

## Sect. 8.

2.

As the matters themselves are of an excellent nature, so is the manner wherein they are revealed in the *Scriptures*, and that,

1. In a clear and perspicuous manner; not but there may be still some passages which are hard to be understood, as being either propheticall or consisting of ambiguous phrases, or containing matters above our comprehension; but all those things which concern the terms of man's salvation are delivered with the greatest evidence and perspicuity. Who cannot understand what these things mean, *What doth the Lord require of thee, but to doe justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* that without faith it is impossible to please God; that without holiness none shall see the Lord; that unless we be born again, we can never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; these and such like things are so plain and clear, that it is nothing but men's shutting their eyes against the light can keep them from understanding them; God intended these things as directions to men; and is not he able to speak intelligibly when he please? he that made the tongue, shall he not speak so as to be understood without an infallible Interpreter? especially when it is his design to make known to men the terms of their eternal happiness. Will God judge men at the great day for not believing those things which they could not understand? Strange, that ever men should judge the *Scriptures* obscure in matters necessary, when the *Scripture* accounts it so great a judgment for men not to understand them.

If



If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; In whom <sup>2 Cor. 4. 34</sup> the god of this world hath blinded the mind: of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine unto them. Sure Lot's door was visible enough, if it were a judgment for the men of Sodom not to see it; and the Scriptures then are plain and intelligible enough, if it be so great a judgment not to understand them.

2. In a powerfull and authoritative manner; as the things contained in Scripture do not so much beg acceptance as command it; in that the expressions wherein our duty is concerned are such as awe men's consciences and pierce to their hearts and to their secret thoughts; *All things are open and naked before this Word of God; every secret of the mind and thought of the heart lies open to its stroke and force; it is quick and powerfull, sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joynts and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* The Word is a Telescope to discover the great Luminaries of the world, the Truths of highest concernment to the souls of men, and it is such a Microscope as discovers to us the smallest Atom of our thoughts, and discerns the most secret intent of the heart. And, as far as this light reacheth, it comes with power and authority, as it comes armed with the Majesty of that God who reveals it, whose authority extends over the soul and conscience of man in its most secret and hidden recesses. Heb. 4. 12, 13.

3. In a pure and unmixed manner; in all other writings how good soever, we have a great mixture of dross and gold together; here is nothing but pure gold, Diamonds without flaws, Suns without spots. The most current coins of the world have their alloyes of baser metals, there is no such mixture in divine Truths; as they all come from the same Author, so they all have the same purity. There is a Urim and Thummim upon the whole Scripture, light and perfection in every part of it. In the Philosophers we may meet, it may be, with some scattered fragments of purer metal, amidst abundance of dross and impure oar; here we have whole wedges of gold, the same vein of purity and holiness running through the whole Book of Scriptures. Hence it is called the

*form*

2 Tim. i. 13. *form of sound words* ; here have been no *hucksters* to corrupt and mix their own *inventions* with *Divine Truths*.

Sect 9.

4. In an uniform and agreeable manner. This I grant is not sufficient of it self to prove the *Scriptures* to be *Divine*, because all men do not contradict themselves in their *writings*, but yet there are some peculiar *circumstances* to be considered in the agreeableness of the *parts* of *Scripture* to each other which are not to be found in mere *humane writings*. 1. That this *doctrine* was delivered by persons who lived in different ages and times from each other. Usually one age corrects another's faults, and we are apt to pity the ignorance of our predecessors, when it may be our posterity may think us as ignorant as we do them. But in the sacred *Scripture* we read not one age condemning another ; we find light still increasing in the series of times in *Scripture*, but no reflections in any time upon the ignorance, or weakness, of the precedent ; the dimmest light was sufficient for its age, and was a step to further discovery. Quintilian gives it as the reason of the great uncertainty of *Grammar* rules, *quia non analogia dimissa cælo formam loquendi dedit* ; that which he wanted as to *Grammar*, we have as to *Divine Truths* ; they are delivered from heaven, and therefore are always uniform and agreeable to each other.

Quintil. lib. 1.  
cap. 6.

2. By persons of different interests in the world. God made choice of men of all ranks to be *Enditers* of his *Oracles*, to make it appear it was no matter of *State-policy* or particular interest which was contained in his word, which persons of such different interests, could not have agreed in as they do. We have *Moses*, *David*, *Solomon*, persons of royal rank and quality ; and can it be any mean thing, which these think it their glory to be *Penners* of ? We have *Isaiab*, *Daniel*, and other persons of the highest education and accomplishments, and can it be any trivial thing which these employ themselves in ? We have *Amos*, and other *Prophets* in the *Old Testament*, and the *Apostles* in the *New*, of the meaner sort of men in the world, yet all these joyn in consort together ; when God tunes their spirits, all agree in the same strain of *divine truths*, and give light and harmony to each other.

3. By



3. *By persons in different places and conditions*; some in prosperity in their own Countrey, some under banishment and adversity, yet all agreeing in the same substance of doctrine; of which no alteration we see was made either for the flattery of those in power, or for avoiding miseries and calamities. And under all the different dispensations before, under and after the Law, though the management of things was different, yet the doctrine and design was for substance the same in all. All the different dispensations agree in the same common principles of religion; the same ground of acceptance with God, and obligation to duty was common to all, though the peculiar instances wherein God was served might be different, according to the ages of growth in the Church of God. So that this great uniformity considered in these circumstances, is an argument that these things came originally from the same Spirit, though conveyed through different instruments to the knowledge of the world.

5. *In a persuasive and convincing manner*: and that these ways. 1. *Bringing divine truths down to our capacity*, clothing spiritual matter in familiar expressions and similitudes, that so they might have the easier admission into our minds.

2. *Propounding things as our interest which are our duty*: thence God, so frequently in Scripture, recommends our duties to us under all those motives which are wont to have the greatest force on the minds of men; and annexeth gracious promises to our performance of them; and those of the most weighty and concerning things. Of grace, favour, protection, deliverance, audience of prayers, and eternal happiness, and if these will not prevail with men, what motives will?

3. *Courting us to obedience, when he might not only command us to obey, but punish presently for disobedience*. Hence are all those most pathetic and affectionate strains we read in Scripture. O that there were such a heart within them, that they would fear me and keep all my commandments always, that it might go well with them, and with their children after them.

Wo unto thee, O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? Jer. 13. 27. when shall it once be? Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, Ezek. 33. 11. for why will ye die, O house of Israel? How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make

*make thee as Admah ? how shall I set thee as Zeboim ? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.* O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not ? What Majesty, and yet what sweetneſs and condeſcenſion is there in theſe expreſſions ? What obſtinacy and rebellion is it in men for them to ſtand out againſt God, when he thus comes down from his throne of Ma- jeſty and wooes rebellious ſinners to return unto him that they may be pardoned ? Such a matchleſs and unparalleld ſtrain of Rhetorick is there in the Scripture, far above the art and inſinuations of the moſt admired Orators.* Thus we ſee the peculiar excellency of the manner wherein the matters contained in Scripture are revealed to us : thus we have conſidered the excellency of the Scripture, as it is a diſcovery of God's mind to the world.

Sect. 10.

2.

The Scriptures may be conſidered as a rule of life, or as a Law of God which is given for the Government of the lives of men, and therein the excellency of it lies in the nature of the duties, and the encouragements to the practice of them.

I. In the nature of the duties required, which are moſt becoming God to require, moſt reaſonable for us to perform.

I. Moſt becoming God to require, as they are moſt ſuitable and agreeable to the Divine nature, the imitation of which in our actions is the ſubſtance of our Religion. Imitation of him in his goodneſs and holineſs, by our conſtant endeavours of mortifying ſin, and growing in grace and piety. In his grace and mercy, by our kindneſs to all men, forgiving the injuries men doe unto us, doing good to our greateſt enemies. In his juſtice and equity, by doing as we would be done by, and keeping a conſcience void of offence towards God and towards men. The firſt takes in the duties of the firſt, the other the duties of the ſecond Table. All acts of piety towards God, are a part of Juſtice ; for, as Tully ſaith, *Quid aliud eſt pietas, niſi juſtitia adverſus Deos ?* and ſo our loving God with our whole hearts, our entire and ſincere obedience to his will, is a part of natural juſtice ; for thereby we do but render unto God that which is his due from us as we are his creatures. We ſee



see then the whole *duty* of man, the *fearing* God and *keeping* his *Commandments*, is as necessary a part of *Justice*, as the rendering to every man his own is.

2. They are most *reasonable* for us to perform, in that,  
 1. *Religion* is not only a service of the *reasonable faculties* which are employed the most in it, the *commands* of the *Scripture* reaching the heart most, and the *service* required being a *spiritual service*, not lying in *meats* and *drinks*, or any *outward observations*, but in a sanctified temper of heart and *mind*, which discovers it self in the course of a *Christian's* life; but,  
 2. The *service* it self of *Religion* is *reasonable*; the *commands* of the *Gospel* are such as no man's *reason* which considers them can doubt of the *excellency* of them. All *natural worship* is founded on the *dictates* of *nature*, all *instituted worship* on God's *revealed will*; and it is one of the *prime dictates* of *nature*, that God must be universally obeyed. Besides, God requires nothing but what is apparently man's *interest* to do; God prohibits nothing but what will *destroy* him if he doth it; so that the *commands* of the *Scriptures* are very *just* and *reasonable*.

2. The *encouragements* are more than *proportionable* to the *difficulty* of *obedience*. God's *commands* are in themselves *easy*, and most *suitable* to our *natures*. What more *rational* for a creature than to obey his *Maker*? all the *difficulty* of *religion* ariseth from the *corruption* of *nature*. Now God, to encourage men to conquer the *difficulties* arising thence, hath propounded the strongest *motives* and most prevailing *arguments* to *obedience*. Such are the *considerations* of God's *love* and *goodness* manifested to the world, by sending his Son into it, to *die* for *sinners*, and to give them an *example* which they are to follow, and by his readiness through him to pardon the *sins*, and accept the *persons* of such who so receive him as to walk in him; and by his promises of *grace* to assist them in the *wrestling* with the *enemies* of their *salvation*. And to all these add that *glorious* and *unconceivable* reward which God hath promised to all those who sincerely obey him; and by these things we see how much the *encouragements* outweigh the *difficulties*, and that none can make the least pretence that there is not motive sufficient to down-weigh the

troubles which attend the exercise of *obedience* to the Will of God. So that we see what a peculiar *excellency* there is in the *Scriptures* as a *rule of life*, above all the Precepts of mere *Moralists*, the *foundation* of obedience being laid deeper in man's obligation to serve his Maker, the *practice* of obedience being carried higher in those most holy *precepts* which are in *Scripture*, the reward of obedience being *incomparably greater* than what men are able to conceive, much less to *promise* or *bestow*.

SECT. II.

3.

The *Excellency* of the *Scriptures* appears, as they contain in them a *Covenant of Grace*, or the *transactions* between God and Man, in order to his *eternal happiness*. The more memorable any *transactions* are, the more *valuable* are any *authentick records* of them. The *Scriptures* contain in them the *Magna Charta* of Heaven, an *Act of pardon* with the *Royal assent* of Heaven, a *Proclamation* of *good-will* from God towards men; and can we then set too great a value on that which contains all the remarkable passages between God and the *souls* of men, in order to their *felicity*, from the beginning of the world? Can we think, since there is a God in the world of infinite *goodness*, that he should suffer all mankind to perish inevitably without his *propounding* any means for escaping of *eternal misery*? Is God so good to men as to this present *life*; and can we think if man's soul be immortal, as we have proved it is, that he should wholly neglect any offer of *good* to men as to their *eternal welfare*? Or is it possible to imagine that *man* should be happy in another world without God's promising it, and prescribing conditions in order to it? If so, then this *happiness* is no free gift of God, unless he hath the *bestowing* and *promising* of it; and man is no *rational agent*, unless a reward suppose *conditions* to be performed in order to the obtaining it; or man may be bound to *conditions* which were never required him; or if they must be required, then there must be a *revelation* of God's will, whereby he doth require them: And if so, then there are some *Records extant* of the transactions between God and man, in order to his *eternal happiness*: For what reason can we have to imagine that such *Records*, if once *extant*, should not continue still, especially since the same

*goodness*



*goodness of God* is engaged to preserve such *Records*, which at first did cause them to be indicted? Supposing then such *Records* extant somewhere in the world of these grand transactions between God and mens *souls*, our business is brought to a *period*; for what other *Records* are there in the world that can in the least *vye* with the *Scriptures*, as to the giving so just an *account* of all the *transactions* between God and men from the *foundation* of the *world*? Which gives us all the *steps*, *methods* and *ways* whereby God hath made known his *mind* and *will* to the world, in order to man's eternal *Salvation*. It remains only then that we *adore* and *magnifie* the *goodness* of God in making known his *Will* to us, and that we set a *value* and *esteem* on the *Scriptures*, as on the only *authentick Instruments* of that *Grand Charter of Peace*, which God hath revealed in order to man's *Eternal Happiness*.

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F I N I S.

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